A CRITICAL HISTORY OF OPERA

by ARTHUR ELSON

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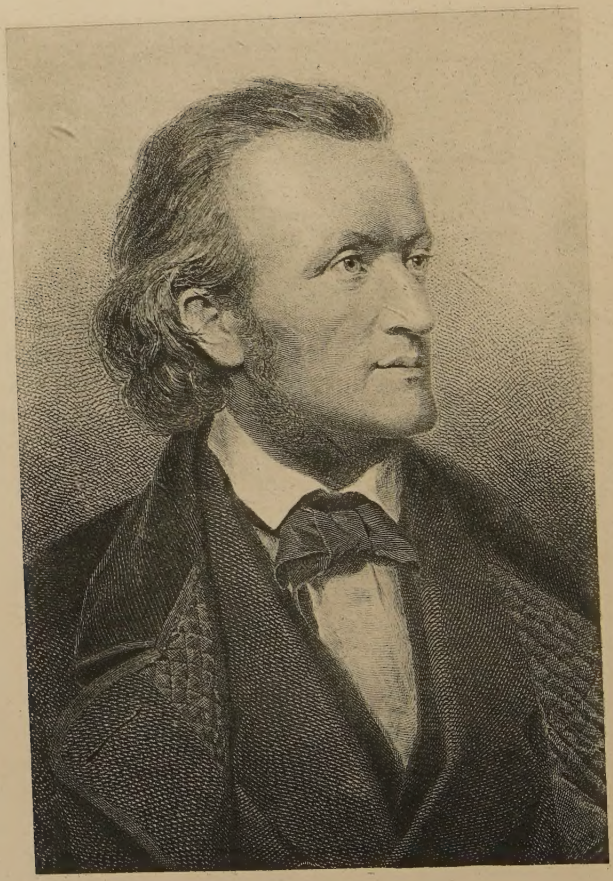
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Wagner.

A Critical History of Opera

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER WORKS IN EACH

By
Arthur Elson

ILLUSTRATED



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TO

THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN

MY MOST INTIMATE COMPANION IN PLEASURE,

AND MY BEST COUNSELLOR IN TOIL, — TO MY FATHER,

Louis C. Elson

THIS BOOK

IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

16506

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A CRITICAL HISTORY OF OPERA.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF OPERA.

In seeking the earliest examples of operatic music, in its true sense, the student must turn to ancient Greece. There, where all that is greatest in art had its origin, the employment of music to increase the effect of drama produced a true opera, in our most modern understanding of the term. Unfortunately, we have now nothing more than scattered fragments of the Grecian music. But from these, and from the writings of the ancient authors, we can form a dim idea of the effect attained. There is no doubt that the great choruses of tragedies like "Agamemnon"

and "Antigone" were sung to the grandest music then composed. The dialogue, too, was never spoken, but declaimed with musical inflection throughout, and the works were accompanied by an orchestra of lyres and flutes, corresponding in tone-colour to the harps and clarinets of the present.

Between ancient and modern times there is nothing to be found resembling opera, except the comic ballad operetta "Robin et Marion," and one or two similar works, by the *trouvère* Adam de la Hale (1240–1287). The so-called miracle and mystery plays were undoubtedly operatic in the sense of possessing music; but they exerted no influence upon secular composers. After the decline of minstrelsy, musical composition became a mere intellectual exercise, consisting of a mathematical interweaving of vocal parts. With the modern era came a revolt against this technicality. But even the music of such great writers as Orlando di

Lasso and Palestrina, with all its expressiveness, was hardly dramatic in spirit. Some composers of the Italian polyphonic school made attempts to employ this style for operatic purposes, but the earliest opera now existing resulted from an independent effort to "revive the just designs of Greece."

At the end of the sixteenth century, a band of Florentine enthusiasts attempted to resuscitate the old style of musical declamation, and originated opera as it exists to-day. "Dafne," with music by Jacopo Peri, is lost, but "Euridice," produced by the same composer in 1600, is still in existence. According to its preface, it was written "to test the effect of the particular kind of melody" which musicians of that day imagined "to be identical with that used by the Greeks and Romans throughout their dramas." Except for a few bars of chorus, the work was made up of accompanied recitative. The orchestra consisted of a violin, *chitarone*

(large guitar), *lira grande* (large viol with ten or more strings), *liuto grosso* (lute), and *gravicembalo* (harpsichord). The harmonies are indicated by the figured bass, and the instrumental parts of the work are rather thin. The beauty lies in the vocal score, which is really expressive, and follows the inflections of the human voice with much success.

But Peri and his rival Caccini, though original, were not skilled musicians. It remained for the genius of Claudio Monteverde to reveal the possibilities of the new form. Trained in the school of Palestrina, he was never at ease in writing according to the contrapuntal rules and restrictions of the older masters. But in opera he found the style of work for which his harmonic gifts were best fitted. His "Arianna" (1607), of which only a few passages are left, "visibly moved the entire theatre to tears," according to a critic of the time. His "Orfeo," produced a year later, is pre-

served to us in its entirety, and shows a tremendous advance over the simple Florentine music-dramas. The instruments used at the first performance were two harpsichords, two bass viols, ten viols, a double harp, two small French violins, two *chitaroni*, two *organi di legno* (sets of wooden pipes), three large *viole da gamba*, four trombones, one *regale* (tiny folding organ), two *cornetti* (wooden horns), one flute, one *clarino* (trumpet), and three *sordini* (muted trumpets). Since Monteverde was himself a good technical musician (violist to the Duke of Mantua, at whose command the two operas were written), the immense success of his works is not surprising, and after his settlement in Venice we find him surrounded by pupils and imitators. Here he introduced two new orchestral effects, the pizzicato of plucked strings, and the violin tremolo.

Cavalli, the most famous pupil of Monteverde, carried on the good work in Venice.

He it was who made the first deviation from the strict "musica parlante" of the Florentines, by the introduction of the aria. He considered that his natural melodic gifts should not be hampered by the artificial declamatory rules of the age of Pericles, and by his frequent use of tunes he became the first cause of many a modern quarrel over the true function of opera. The aria was still further elaborated by Cesti, who added the da capo, or repeat of the first part after the close of the second. Cesti was a pupil of the great Roman composer Carissimi, and from this renowned teacher he imbibed a thorough knowledge of the best methods of phrasing and instrumentation. Cavalli had enriched opera by introducing programme-music, which attempts to reproduce in tone the actual sights and sounds of nature. Cesti, by combining Cavalli's methods with his own musical learning, raised opera to a higher level of dignity than

it had ever before attained. At the same time, however, this very musical learning made him give too little attention to dramatic significance.

Meanwhile the lyric drama, at first the luxury of princes and nobles, came to depend on the support of the whole people. In Venice, in the year 1637, the first public theatre was opened, and met with such success that by the close of the century the city contained ten other similar institutions, and gave a livelihood to a score of minor composers. In Rome, no opera was performed until 1632, and no theatre opened until 1671, though a band of strolling players presented an operetta on a cart in the carnival of 1606. Bologna seems to have encouraged opera from its inception, though no theatre appeared there until 1680. Naples, afterward such an operatic centre, seems to have been later than any of the Italian cities in giving encouragement to the new form.

By far the most famous composer of the century was Alessandro Scarlatti, the founder of the Neapolitan school. Endowed with great natural gifts, he soon recognised the value of strict training to develop his talent. The history of music contains many instances of the value of hard work. Beethoven kept at the piano by a stern father, Schubert earnestly striving to master the counterpoint he had neglected in childhood, and Mendelssohn writing some musical thought each day, are but a few of many examples. In Scarlatti's case, unlike Schubert's, the forethought came first, and not afterward. The great Italian never ceased to labour at the science of music until he became recognised as the most learned composer of his time. His knowledge of counterpoint, combined with his great natural genius, enabled him to write with a freedom and breadth of style that put all his predecessors far in the background. In his hands the "da capo"

of Cesti became fully developed, and the interminable monologue of previous times was broken up into three distinct forms, — the *recitativo secco*, or plain recitative of ordinary stage action, the *recitativo stromentato*, or accompanied recitative, used in moments of intensity, and the aria, for the impassioned soliloquy so often indulged in by operatic characters. He wrote no less than 108 operas, besides many cantatas of more or less dramatic style, and all of these are marked by a rare freshness of melody that does not fail to charm even at the present day. It must be noted, however, that mere beauty of music is not sufficient for the needs of the stage, — the music must be appropriate, as well as attractive, and must reflect, or intensify the dramatic situation. Judged according to this rule, Cesti's music began to deviate from the true path, while Scarlatti's departed from it still farther.

Meanwhile the other countries of Europe

adopted the new form of amusement that Italy had found so successful, changing it more or less to suit their needs and accord with existing conditions. In France, as early as 1581, the success of "Le Ballet Comique de la Reine," by the Italian Baltazarini (Beaujoyeaulx), showed that the court of Henry III. was fully able to enjoy its diaphanous plot, and appreciate its pretty music. In 1600, Rinuccini, the librettist of Peri's "Euridice," visited Paris in the suite of Maria de' Medici, and attempted to introduce the new cult of the Florentines, but met with little encouragement. The ballet, with more or less incidental music, continued its aristocratic career, undisturbed by rival entertainments, for nearly fifty years. Cardinal Mazarin made a second attempt to import the Italian article, also without permanent result. It was not until 1646, with Venice already revelling in the luxury of four public theatres, that the first French

opera appeared. In that year the Abbé Mailly, secretary to the papal nuncio, saw his tragedy, "Achébar, Roi de Mogol," produced at Carpentras, by his master, Cardinal Bichi. After some performances of Italian works, the native talent again came to the front in 1659, in the shape of a pastoral by the poet Perrin, with music by Cambert. As the work pleased Louis XIV., its success was assured, and more of its kind followed by royal command. So enthusiastic did the Frenchmen become that even Italian operas met with a cold reception, and in 1669 Perrin was given a royal charter allowing him to found a national academy of music.

The success of Cambert's "Pomone" and "Les Peines et Plaisirs d'Amour" (1671) aroused the jealousy of that foremost of intriguers and musicians of the time, Jean Baptiste Lully. Born near Florence about 1633, Lully entered the kitchen service of

Mlle. de Montpensier, in Paris, when thirteen years old. Escaping from that post by his skill in violin-playing, he rose to be composer, director, and music-master to the royal family. Not yet satisfied, he succeeded in getting control of the academy in 1672, and in conjunction with the poet Quinault proceeded to create a school of French opera that won him everlasting fame. Up to this time he had produced many ballets and *divertissements*, and the years 1672–1686 witnessed the production of no less than twenty operas, in which widely different subjects were treated with consummate mastery. To Lully belongs the development of the overture, which he found as a faint-hearted Italian prelude, and bequeathed to posterity as a well-marked musical form consisting of a dignified largo, a bright fugal allegro, and a stately minuet. He invested the dull *recitativo secco* with new beauty, by adding accompaniment, and he introduced

his choruses with consummate dramatic skill. The freshness of his melodies compensates largely for their monotony and poor harmonic treatment, but his works would hardly please modern ears, because of the frequent changes of rhythm which he used in producing declamatory effects. He died in 1687, after reigning supreme in the French art world for fifteen years.

None of Lully's immediate successors were of the mental proportions necessary to assume the mantle of the departed genius. Colasse, Danchet, Campra, and Destouches did little but imitate, and it is not until the appearance of Rameau (1683–1764) that we find a musician worth more than passing mention. This composer, famous in connection with clavichord playing and systematic harmony, did not enter the operatic field until his fiftieth year, and then began with an apparent failure. His "Hippolyté et Aricie," produced in 1733, fell flat at first,

but time showed that this was the fault of the audience rather than the composer, and the score of operas and ballets that followed it placed him at the head of the French school. For the monotony and trivialities of his rivals he substituted new forms, piquant rhythms, bold modulations, and a richer orchestration. Instead of merely allowing the wood-wind to play in unison with the strings, he wrote separate parts for it, and brought the flutes, oboes, and bassoons into increased prominence. He was unfortunate in not finding a good librettist, and his melodies were less simply captivating than those of Lully, but he enjoyed a tremendous popularity in spite of the growing strength of Italian opera in Paris.

In Elizabethan England, the masque occupied the same position that the ballet held on the other side of the channel. It was always given with more or less incidental music, and as at that time the English com-

posers were scarcely less famous and less numerous than the poets, there can be no doubt that the form was thoroughly worthy of the popularity it enjoyed. In 1617 a masque of Ben Jonson's was given a complete musical setting (by Lanière), which must have made it a true opera, but no imitations followed it. What is generally spoken of as the first English opera was "Dido and Æneas," the work of England's greatest composer, Henry Purcell.

Most of the dramas of the Restoration contained incidental music, and Charles II., who disliked the elaborate counterpoint of the day, sent Pelham Humphreys to learn the Paris fashions and bring back a full description of Lully's works. The result of Humphreys's operatic studies in the gay capital is to be found in the composition of his pupil Purcell, which was first produced in 1679 at a young ladies' school in Leicester Fields. Purcell's later work for the stage

consisted wholly of incidental music, but many passages show marvellous genius, and in melody and dramatic power alike he was far ahead of his French contemporary. Purcell was the last great musical genius of England, and no further activity there is to be recorded until the advent of Handel.

Meanwhile the Germans had kept fairly well abreast of the other nations in operatic progress. There can be no doubt that but for the Thirty Years' War Germany would have taken a preëminent position in the art world as well as in the political life of Europe. But under the existing conditions she had to borrow her civilisation from her neighbours. As early as 1627 we find a German composer, Heinrich Schütz, setting to music a translation of Rinuccini's "Dafne" for performance at the marriage of the Landgrave of Hesse, in Torgau; but, unfortunately, all trace of this, as of Peri's earlier

setting, is lost. Italian operas were given at Regensburg in 1653, at Vienna in 1665, and at Munich in the same year. "Seelewig," a semi-sacred opera by Sigmund Staden, was printed at Nuremburg as early as 1644, but German opera was not established on a permanent basis until the opening of an opera-house in Hamburg, in 1678, with a performance of "Adam and Eve," by Johann Theile. In that year three other operas were given, and a number of composers soon came forward.[1] One man, however, Reinhard Keiser (1673–1739), was decidedly *primus inter pares,* and did for Germany a service similar to that of Lully in France and Purcell in England. Of the 116 operas that he is said to have produced, only a few remain; but these few show that Keiser, though less perfect in finish than

[1] The leading lights of the Hamburg school, besides Keiser and Theile, were Franck, Strungk, Kusser, Handel's friend Mattheson, and Telemann.

Lully, was a master of expression, and made evident efforts to attain dramatic truth.

But Hamburg was to witness the triumphs of a much greater artist, whose music has a firm hold on public favour today, though his operas are too archaic in form for the present, — Georg Friedrich Handel. Born in Halle in 1685, he showed an early fondness for the forbidden luxury of music, and is said to have concealed a clavichord in his room during his seventh year. In his youth he studied the respectable profession of law, at his father's desire, but gave up this distasteful work in 1702. His first opera, "Almira," was produced in 1705, and was followed quickly by three others. Handel's wonderful gift of melody brought the Hamburg school to its highest point, but his earlier works are marred by the barbarous fashion of mixing Italian and German to suit the needs of the singers, who seem to have been dictatorial in the past as well as in

the present. The early crudities soon disappeared, however, and in 1707 the composer left for Italy, to worship at the shrine of Scarlatti. Here "Rodrigo" (Florence, 1707) and "Agrippina" (Venice, 1708) brought fresh laurels to the Saxon genius. In 1710 he settled in London, where his "Rinaldo" (composed in a fortnight) surpassed everything previously existing in the operatic world. Here he brought forth one piece after another, during a period of thirty years; managing theatres, soothing the disputes of singers, braving the wrath of the dandies by composing in his own chosen methods, triumphing over his rival, Buononcini,[1] making fortunes and losing them, and

[1] An account of this controversy is to be found in the excellent biography of Handel by C. F. A. Williams. Handel was of an arbitrary character, as is shown by the well-known anecdote of his holding the prima donna Cuzzoni out of a window and threatening to drop her unless she promised to sing a certain passage in the way he wished. He soon aroused the opposition of the fash-

finally leaving the stage with "Deidamia," in 1741. From that year till his death, in 1759, he spent his time in composing oratorios and paying off his debts.

Handel's compositions represent the highest development of the opera of the past. The works of his successors are cast in a different mould, and foreshadow the triumphs of the present, while his own are rather the result of a successful evolution than the cause of a new progress; therefore it may not be amiss to pause for a moment and inspect their style more closely. In place of the straightforward drama emphasised by

ionable set by writing in his own style instead of giving them the musical trifles they desired, and as a result his music was criticised as being too involved. Feeling ran high, and tea-parties were given, even in Lent, with the express object of diminishing his audiences. "No efforts, however mean, however scurrilous, were spared by his enemies to ruin and disgrace him. But his obstinate Saxon nature rose superior to everything. . . . He fought on, not knowing when he was beaten, till he finally overcame his enemies." (Williams, "Handel," p. 129.)

music, according to the canons of the Florentine classicists, the musical elaborations of Cesti, Scarlatti, and his pupils had led to the establishment of definite rules regarding the kind of arias to be employed, their number, their order in the opera, and even the number of characters to be introduced.

The performers were generally six, at most seven. Usually three were women and three men, two of the former being sopranos and the third a contralto, while the first man was always an artificial soprano, the second either soprano or contralto, and the remaining one (or two) tenor or bass. On the popularity of these singers much of the success of the work depended. We should find it strange to-day if Hercules were to sing a soprano solo, or Theseus warble out a series of roulades *in alt;* the conventions of Handel's day, however, not only accepted these conditions, but insisted on them. The light opera prima donna of the present, so

often decked out in the full regalia of manhood, is but the logical successor of the eighteenth century opera heroes.

The airs entrusted to these personages were arranged in well-defined classes. All the numbers were in the "da capo" form, closing with a repeat of the first part, but they differed from one another in the character of their music. The *aria cantabile* was a work of simplicity and sweetness, though even this was often garnished with vocal ornaments by the singer. The *aria di portamento*, also a slow movement, was more symmetrical and more strongly marked in rhythm, allowing the singer to swell on sustained notes or glide from one to another, but admitting of little embellishment. Its expression was sedate and dignified, its accompaniment simple. The *aria di mezzo carattere*, as its name implies, possessed medium qualities, and was taken at a fair speed. Its accompaniment was richer than the preceding, and more

varied. The *aria parlante* was more declamatory in character, and therefore well suited to the expression of strong emotion. The *aria di bravura*, or *d'agilita*, was entirely a display piece, and contained rapid or difficult passages that were intended to exhibit the utmost skill of the singer. To such a pitch was the art of singing carried in Handel's time that the best artists of to-day need care and study in preparing passages that the Handelian singers attacked with ease.

No less stringent were the laws governing the number and character of airs to be employed. The operas were divided into three acts, and each artist sang at least one aria in each act. No performer was allowed to sing two arias in succession, nor could two similar arias occur together even when sung by different performers. The most important selections were placed at the close of the first and second acts. In the last two acts the hero and heroine each expected a special

scena, consisting of a recitative followed by a display aria. Besides these, their desire for applause had to be still further gratified by a grand duet. No trios or quartets were permitted, though in one instance Handel was bold enough to defy this rule and introduce a quartet into "Radamisto." The operas were always concluded by a lively chorus, sometimes accompanied by a dance. Under these conditions it is not surprising to find that the librettists were unable to treat their subjects in a worthy manner, and the composers cared little or nothing about suiting their music to the dramatic emotion of the words. Opera had degenerated into a set of contrasted vocal forms, as definite as the group of instrumental movements that constituted the suite. In Handel's case the man was greater than the method, and the formal rules of the time often lost their absurdity through the force of his genius, but not even his wonderful music could give permanence to an art-

form that was based on incorrect æsthetic principles.

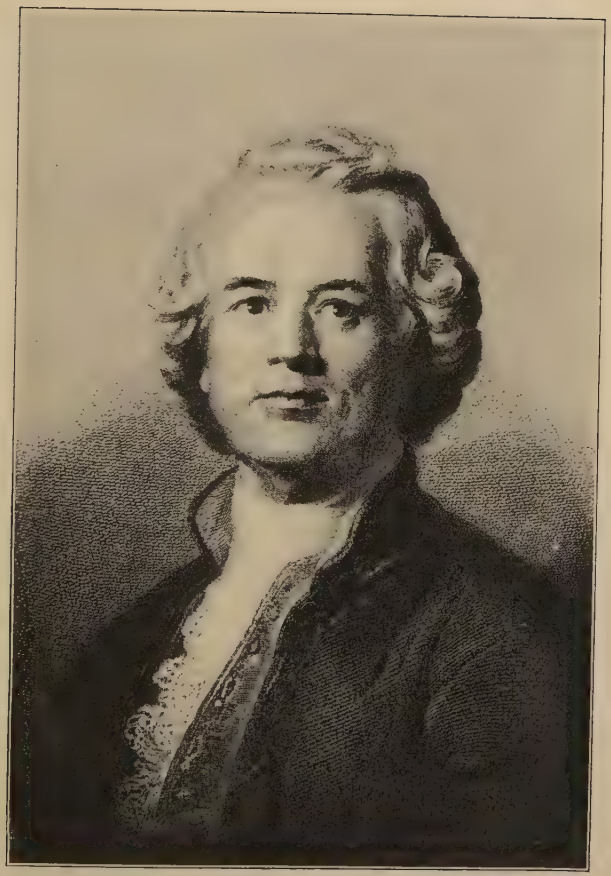
The orchestra of Handel's time had also reached the point where the old was discarded and the new began. The obsolete organs and guitars of Monteverde no longer appear. In their place we find a complete set of stringed instruments, consisting of first and second violins, violas, violoncellos (rarely used), and contrabasses; an adequate group in the wood-wind, including flutes (rarely used), oboes, and bassoons; and a brass band consisting of horns, trumpets, and in the oratorios an occasional trombone. Thus the only important modern instrument still lacking was the clarinet.

CHAPTER II.

GLUCK'S REFORMS.

It has been well said that French opera was for a long time the work of Italians and Germans, and the remark has held true down to the death of Meyerbeer in 1864. The first French school had been the work of the Italian, Lully, and now Paris was soon to witness the overthrow of its traditions by the German, Gluck.

Christoph Willibald Gluck was born on July 2, 1714, at Weidenwang, near Neumarkt, in the Upper Palatinate. His early days were passed with his parents in the household of Prince Lobkowitz. At the age of twelve he was sent to a Jesuit school, in Bohemia, where he took a six years' course,



GLUCK.

including the classics, singing, violin, clavecin, and organ. After this his musical education was continued at Prague, where he earned his living by singing in church, playing the violin at rustic dances, and giving concerts in surrounding towns. In 1736 he journeyed to Vienna, where he was fortunate enough to obtain an engagement from Prince Melzi to take charge of the latter's private band. With this patron Gluck went to Italy, where he completed the study of harmony and soon began to indulge in the fashionable occupation of composing operas. During his Italian sojourn he became Cavaliere of the Order of the Sprone d'Oro (Golden Spur) at Rome in 1754, and he was afterward extremely punctilious in demanding the title of Ritter von Gluck.

The composer's earlier works were of course written in the Italian style of the period. While they were successful enough, they were not essentially new, and possessed

no more powers of endurance than any other conventional works of the time. To this epoch in his life belong "Artaserse" (1741), "Cleonice" (1742), "Siface" (1743), "Alessandro nell' Indie" (1745), and others of their kind, brought out variously in Milan, Venice, Cremona, or Turin. In consequence of their favourable reception, Gluck was called to England in 1745, as composer for the opera at the Haymarket. Here he produced two new works, "La Caduta de' Giganti" and the pasticcio "Pyramo e Tisbe." But these two, as also the rewritten "Artamene," proved utter failures, and their music, dubbed by Handel as detestable, caused that worthy to utter his well-known exclamation about the composer, "He knows no more counterpoint than my cook."[1] Doubtless the older master would have been surprised to learn that the

[1] It may be noted, however, that this cook, Gustavus Waltz, became an excellent bass singer and viol di gamba player.

later work of this musical intruder was destined to banish wholly from opera the intricate artificialities of his own contrapuntal writing.

After the London fiasco, Gluck took his wounded vanity to Paris, where he endeavoured to nurse it back to health by reflecting on the probable cause of the trouble. The works of Rameau, France's one great native composer of the past, produced a deep impression on him, and gradually made him see the force of accompaniments that were appropriate as well as attractive. He came to the conclusion that the recognised Italian opera of the time was nothing but a more or less miscellaneous concert, with an incidental thread of plot running through it. Returning to Vienna in 1746, he attempted to improve his views by a course of study that included languages, literature, æsthetics applied to music, in short anything that would help him in his career, and even a few

things that apparently would not. The works of this period in Gluck's life are of exceptional interest to the musical student. While no new form had as yet been evolved, they show an increasing freedom and sincerity of style, and their pages often form the basis of long passages in the later and more ambitious works of the composer. After eight years spent in producing material of this sort, there came a period when Gluck's genius seemed to wane, and nothing worth mentioning came from his pen. Between 1755 and 1761 he apparently settled into the ordinary routine of existing circumstances, and wrote nothing more than a series of *divertissements* of the most unpretentious quality.

But still waters run deep, and while on the surface all progress appeared ended, the undercurrent of his thoughts and studies was always at work, until at last, in 1762, its existence became evident. In that year he

brought forth a new opera, to illustrate all his slowly formed ideas of what the stage demanded, and so true were the principles upon which it was founded that it has held its place in the repertoire even to the present day. It is an appropriate coincidence that this epoch-making work, "Orfeo ed Eurydice," should be founded on the same subject as the earlier music-drama of Peri, which proved such a successful model in the day of small beginnings. This time the libretto was the work of the poet Calzabigi, a writer of far more dignity and power than the conventional Metastasio, who furnished the verbal inanities for Gluck's earlier effusions.

The story is written in a broad and dignified manner, and the music to which it was set rests on no artificial law, but is the natural expression of the emotions and situations found in the poem. The work is divided into three acts. The curtain rises upon a grassy valley, with the tomb of Eurydice in

the foreground. A troop of shepherds and shepherdesses adorn it with flowers, until at last their mournful chorus is interrupted by a passionate cry of lamentation from Orpheus. After their departure, he invokes the shade of his lost wife, and declares his intention of following her to the under-world. The god Amor then enters, and tells Orpheus of the conditions imposed upon him by the immortals if he should undertake to rescue Eurydice from the powers of Hades. Left alone, the bereaved minstrel meditates upon the chances, and determines to make the attempt.

The second act takes place in the realm of shades. A picturesque chorus of the Furies ushers it in, while now and then the barking of the dog Cerberus is heard. In the midst of the tumult Orpheus appears, and with the aid of his soul-compelling lyre makes a touching plea for mercy. At first the Furies are obdurate, and time after time his prayer is answered by a stern, abrupt refusal, but at

last the magic of his singing has its effect, and they yield him a passage through their ranks. The action then changes to the Elysian Fields. Here the blest spirits of the departed are discovered in the midst of a scene of surpassing beauty. Orpheus soon arrives, and at first is lost in wonder at the enchantment of the prospect. After his admiration is partially sated, he remembers his quest, and proceeds to execute it. By command of the gods, he may not look upon Eurydice while in the nether world, so he tries to find her by touch and instinct. The spirits gather about him, and at last, moved by his fidelity, they place her hand in his.

The last act takes place in a rocky cavern, where Orpheus is seen leading Eurydice back to the light of day. She is transported with joy at seeing him once more, but after a while notices that he holds his face away from her, and begins to reproach him with coldness. He tries to soothe her suspicion,

but in vain, and at last in response to her entreaties he looks upon her. Eurydice falls lifeless, as a penalty for Orpheus's disobedience of the Olympian decree. He then bursts forth with his famous lament ("What shall I do without Eurydice?"), but in the midst of his grief Amor returns, and revives Eurydice as a reward for his faithfulness.

As already intimated, the music to this story is entirely free from the conventions that fettered the compositions of the Italian school. All formal rules were discarded, and the composer used solos, choruses, and orchestral effects whenever he wished, to heighten the dramatic situation. Everywhere there was an attempt at sincerity and realism. The barking of Cerberus is portrayed on the contrabasses, the sights and sounds of nature in the Elysian Fields are depicted in the orchestra with a delicacy that is always sure in attaining its results, and the work of the singers is everywhere en-

dowed with the proper dramatic qualities. In judging such an opera by present standards, its music may well seem less striking than when it was first played, but it is unfair not to make a generous allowance for the great increase in orchestral forces between that day and this. If Berlioz spoke of the overture as "incredible nonsense," it must be remembered that he himself stands accused of lacking inspiration and "ciphering with notes." If the outburst of Orpheus seems rather tame to modern ears, we may still grant that its direct pathos is not without effect even now, and we can hardly demand that the measured emotions of the classical minstrel should resemble the indignant fury of a "Tosca," for example.

This opera, like many other works that represent an advance over existing conditions, did not meet with instant success, but was coldly received at first. For a time Gluck went back to orthodoxy and Metasta-

sio, and during the next five years he gave the court world several pieces of the older style. But he was not content to leave matters *in statu quo*, and in 1767 made another attempt at dramatic immortality, again in conjunction with Calzabigi.

This time the subject was "Alceste." The opening scene shows the palace at Pheræ, with the populace praying for the life of the shepherd-king Admetus. Alcestis, his queen, leads the people to the temple of Apollo, where the oracle announces that Admetus will perish unless some one will take his place. Alcestis decides to do this, and offers herself as a sacrifice. In the original version Alcestis obtains leave from Death to return and say farewell to her husband, but in spite of impressive music this episode is now omitted, as it delays the action. In the later arrangement, the rejoicing at the recovery of Admetus is turned to grief by the appearance of Alcestis with

the news of her own doom. Admetus passionately refuses her sacrifice, but she insists upon it, and bids farewell to life. While the people are lamenting her fate, Hercules appears, and learns of the calamity. Meanwhile Alcestis is followed to the portals of Hades by Admetus, but she remains obdurate. Just as she is about to enter, Hercules rushes in, and, after a struggle, rescues her from the powers of Death.

This work went even further in the direction of dramatic unity than "Orfeo" had done. It was conceived and composed throughout in a broad, serious vein, and brought the new school fairly before the Vienna public. Here again the music aimed to intensify the drama; solos, choruses, and concerted pieces were introduced, not by any set rule, but whenever and wherever they seemed appropriate; and the true rendering of the dramatic situation was never for an instant sacrificed to a display of pedantic

learning on the composer's part, or florid vocalism on the singer's. These principles, stated clearly in Gluck's preface to "Alceste" (also in that of his next work, "Paride ed Elena"), were not absolutely the invention of the composer. They followed Peri's original aims in some degree, though the earlier innovator tolerated a large amount of vocal display in his prima donna. In 1720 Benedetto Marcello had also set forth the canons of true operatic art in his "Teatro alla Moda." But he seems to have been one of those men who were in favour of the laws, but against their enforcement, for his own operas did not illustrate his theories. It remained for Gluck to carry out the reform in a practical way, and establish the new without merely destroying the old.

But the way of the reformer is hard, and Gluck met with little better treatment than is usually accorded to that daring individual. For the atrocious sin of defying existing

conditions, he was severely condemned by the multitude who accept at face value whatever is labelled correct by fashion, while those who frequented the opera merely for amusement found the earnestness of the new school altogether too tedious. But among the more thoughtful and serious patrons of music the worth of the new departure found ready acknowledgment, and one of those who felt the force of the novel methods was Marie Antoinette, afterward Queen of France.

The cold reception of his operas on their first production in Vienna made Gluck cast longing eyes in another direction. Finding a warm admirer in Du Rollet, the French attaché, he was soon engaged with this partisan in the completion of an opera for the Parisian stage. Du Rollet chose for a subject "Iphigenie en Aulide," as treated in Racine's adaptation of the tragedy of Euripides.

In the first act, the goddess Diana has demanded a sacrifice, to atone for Agamemnon's unwitting insult to her, and Iphigenia, his daughter, has been named as victim by the high priest Calchas. Agamemnon tries to keep Iphigenia away from the scene, and ostensibly yields to the persuasion of Calchas, thinking his daughter and her mother, Clytemnestra, have been warned of the danger. But the message miscarries, and the two women arrive in ignorance of the fatal decree. Agamemnon then tries to drive them away by saying that Achilles, Iphigenia's lover, is false, but the appearance of the faithful Achilles himself frustrates this plan.

In the second act, the rejoicings over Iphigenia's marriage are turned to woe when her doom becomes known. Clytemnestra entreats Achilles to save her daughter, and he swears to Agamemnon that he will do this, while Agamemnon again tries to per

suade his wife and daughter to leave the place.

In the third act, while the Greeks are angrily demanding their victim, Achilles urges Iphigenia to save herself, but she refuses. After bidding farewell to her mother, she is led off to the sacrifice. Achilles, true to his intention, interrupts the ceremony with a band of Thessalian followers, and a fight ensues; but eighteenth century convention interferes at this point, and Calchas stops the combat, proclaims Diana's wrath appeased, and gives Iphigenia to Achilles.

Written in a broadly declamatory vein, this work excelled all Gluck's previous compositions. But in spite of an amount of wire-pulling that would have done credit to a modern politician, he would not have been able to arrange for its performance at all, save for the royal favour of Marie Antoinette. Through her influence it was at last brought out, on April 19, 1774. Owing to

the court patronage, and to Gluck's careful supervision, the performance was a complete success, and the new school won a host of adherents. The fluent purity of Lully and the dramatic strength of Rameau were here united with an intensity of passion, a glowing sincerity of expression, that for a time seemed to carry everything before it.

"Orfeo," reproduced in 1774, met with an enthusiastic reception, and the partial failure of two of Gluck's earlier operas, when produced at the French court in the following year, was atoned for by the brilliant success of "Alceste," in 1776. In the next year came a new masterpiece, "Armide," founded this time on the romantic legend of Tasso.

Armida, a princess skilled in magic, laments that Rinaldo alone, of all the Crusaders, is blind to her charms. When called upon to name a husband, she chooses the one who shall conquer Rinaldo. The entrance of the paynim knight Arontes, robbed

of his captives and wounded by Rinaldo, arouses a renewed wish for vengeance on that hero. In the second act, Armida's enchantments lead Rinaldo to her magic garden, where the fascinations of the place lull him to slumber. Armida then enters, dagger in hand, but the sight of the sleeping knight produces such an effect on her that she falls in love with him. In the third act, Rinaldo has rejected her advances, and she vacillates between love and hate, but ends by clinging to her passion for him. After an unnecessary fourth act, dealing with the adventures of two Crusaders who have set out to rescue Rinaldo, the fifth act shows him in her palace, at last a captive to her charms. After a romantic love-duet, she leaves him to be entertained for awhile by her spirits. The two Crusaders now enter, and Rinaldo is soon brought back to the ascetic frame of mind that befits the knights of Godfrey de Bouillon. He then bids a last farewell to

Armida, while that enchantress, left alone in her despair, calls upon her demons to destroy her magic palace.

Despite the success of "Iphigenie" and "Alceste," the course of true art did not by any means run smooth. In Paris, as elsewhere, there was no lack of devotees of the conventional Italian school of meaningless melody, and these at once raised a hue and cry against what seemed to them the incoherent ravings of an intruder. It was partly in answer to such hostile criticisms that "Armide" was written, for in it Gluck proved himself amply able to express sentiments of grace and tenderness, and depict scenes of sensuous loveliness. Instead of declamatory effects of tragic grandeur, he employed lyrical themes of the most voluptuous beauty, and some of the numbers, especially Armida's great duet with Rinaldo in the last act, seem to anticipate the triumphs of romanticism in the following century.

But the fight was now on in earnest. Gluck's opponents had imported the Italian Piccini,[1] himself a musician of no mean attainments, with the intention of obliterating the obnoxious reformer. An acrimonious war of words and pamphlets had not succeeded in hiding the new light under a bushel of abuse, so the rival composer was set at work by his patrons upon a new opera, "Roland," that was intended to lead the public taste back into the old channel. The success of "Armide," four months before "Roland" appeared, served only to add fuel to the fire of their wrath. They were not content with the admiration accorded to "Roland" and its successor, "Atys," but aimed at the complete expulsion of Gluck from popular favour. They declared that his music was unmelodic, unnatural, and lacking in elegance and refinement. They accused

[1] Spelled Piccinni by modern authorities, but the form in the text seems preferable.

him of using noise to conceal poverty of thought, and were wholly unable to see the beauty of his rugged harmonies and bold modulations. In addition to this, they censured his subjects as rough in execution and unfit for musical settings. In short, they would not allow that he possessed any genius whatever.[1]

[1] The Gluck-Piccini feud was a contest of parties rather than of men, and neither party would see the slightest good in the other's idol. Castil Blaze relates that when Mlle. Levasseur, as Alceste, reached the words, "You break my heart," one of the Piccini party cried, "You break my ears," upon which a Gluckist answered, "What luck, for you can get a better pair." — *De l'Opéra en France*, p. 24.

Gluck found the conditions in Paris anything but good. The orchestra was slovenly, the actors sang through their noses, and the fashionables demanded a special display of their favourites. Sutherland Edwards ("History of the Opera," vol. i., p. 278) relates that when the French forced a ballet into "Orpheus," the great dancer Vestris asked for an extra chacone. "Do you think the Greeks knew what a chacone was?" exclaimed the indignant composer. "Did they not!" replied the astonished Vestris, adding, in a tone of compassion, "Then they are much to be pitied."

Meanwhile Gluck went on in the path of progress, undismayed if not unmoved, and in 1779 reached the zenith of his career by the production of "Iphigenie en Tauride." The scene is laid in the temple of Diana at Tauris, where Iphigenia, saved by the goddess from the knife of Calchas, is now high priestess. The priestesses beseech the gods to be propitious, and when the storm with which the piece opens has gradually subsided, Iphigenia relates her dream of Agamemnon's death, and in her woe grows weary of life herself. Thoas, the Scythian king, now enters, and decrees a sacrifice. Two young strangers, shipwrecked in the storm, are chosen by him as victims. These two, Orestes and Pylades, refuse to disclose their names, and are told to make ready for death.

In the second act, Orestes, in prison, refuses the consolation of Pylades, and when the latter is taken from the cell, sinks to the floor overcome. Gradually he becomes a

prey to visions of the Furies and the murdered Clytemnestra, from which he awakes with a shriek to find Iphigenia standing by him. He confesses to her the murder of Agamemnon and his own vengeance on Clytemnestra, but conceals his identity by saying that Orestes is dead. Iphigenia, hearing the news for the first time, bursts into a passionate lament.

In the next act, she decides to free one of the prisoners and send him with a message to her orphaned sister Electra. Instinctively she chooses Orestes, but he will not allow the sacrifice of his friend, so Pylades departs bearing Iphigenia's words. In the last act, Iphigenia is about to sacrifice Orestes, in spite of her mysterious sympathy for him, when he discloses his name, and recognition ensues. The king is furious at this interruption of the sacrifice, but Pylades returns with a host of Grecian youths and kills the tyrant. The opera closes with the appearance of

Pallas Athene, who commands that the image of Diana shall be transported to her beloved Greece.

The success of this work was instantaneous and decisive. It created a furore of enthusiasm in Paris, and the rival composition of Piccini on the same subject, two years later, was consigned to a well-merited oblivion.[1] In this opera Gluck evidently endeavoured to surpass himself. The dramatic effects of "Alceste" were here united with all the lyrical grace of "Armide," and resulted in the highest and most convincing

[1] The delay of Piccini's "Iphigenia" was due, not to Gluck himself, but to the machinations of some of Gluck's supporters. Its ultimate failure was emphasised by the appearance of the prima donna, Laguerre, in a state of intoxication, during the second performance. Sophie Arnould, who had won success in Gluck's best rôles, said, "This is not 'Iphigenie en Tauride,' but 'Iphigenie en Champagne.'"

Regarding the merits of the contest, Edwards observes that, while many composers, including Gluck himself, begin with the Italian style and outgrow it, there are none who proceed in the reverse direction.

expression of his genius. The graphic picture of a rising storm in the overture, the barbaric splendour of the Scythian dances, Pylades's tender air of consolation to his friend, and the wonderful accompaniment to the vision of Orestes, are but a few of the many beautiful passages that have made this work immortal. Little wonder that Piccini was unable to make headway against the popular approval of such a creation.

With this triumph Gluck's career may fairly be said to close. A few months later he brought out "Echo et Narcisse," and he left an unfinished work, "Les Danaides," to be completed by his pupil, Salieri, but neither of these were of much importance. After the apoplectic stroke that ended his activity he retired to Vienna, where a second stroke carried him off in 1787.

Gluck's service in orchestration was great. He gave the orchestra a fixed composition;

he dropped the harpsichord, and introduced harps, trombones, clarinets, and percussion instruments; he made the overture a true preparation for the play, he used the commendable method of writing out his scores in full, he invested the dry recitative with a new beauty, and he banished the useless and artificial ornaments of florid vocalism from the stage. But more than all this, he gave to the world a series of plays in which sublimity of thought and directness of action were united with music that did not merely tickle the ear, but invested the dramas with a poetic warmth and vividness combined with a chaste simplicity of effect that has made his works stand as models of classical beauty for all ages.

CHAPTER III.

THE RISE OF LIGHT OPERA.

WHILE the grand opera composers had been employed in furnishing the world with a voluminous series of tragedies, historical or mythical, ancient or mediæval, it was not to be supposed that comedy was cast utterly into the background. As early as the days of Cavalli, the comic element had shown its appearance on the stage, though not in a very decisive manner. In 1639 a musical comedy by Mazzocchi and Marazzoli, entitled "Chi Sofre Speri," was performed in Florence, under the patronage of Cardinal Barberini, and was witnessed by the poet Milton. About twenty years later a theatre was erected there, devoted wholly to comedy,

but for some reason it did not prove successful. The true *Opera Buffa* came later, and arose directly from the intermezzi that were introduced between the acts of the serious plays.

Intermezzi seem to have existed from ancient times, when they took the form of *Satiræ*, and were given with the Roman comedies. In the mysteries and miracle plays of mediæval Christianity, they appeared as hymns or carols. In the Italian renaissance they became madrigals, choruses, and sometimes solos. Soon they grew in importance, and in 1589, at the marriage of the Florentine Grand Duke Ferdinand, we find a set of five interludes built on a most ambitious scale, and resembling fully developed masques. As the object of all these musical side-shows was to relieve the continued strain of the principal piece, it is not surprising to find them written in contrast to it; and thus there arose a series of comic

scenes between the acts of *Opera Seria.* Soon it became customary for the different intermezzi to contain the same characters. At this point the only step necessary to create *Opera Buffa* was the separation of the intermezzi from their serious frame, and their union in one piece.

This step was taken, in the early part of the eighteenth century, by the Neapolitan composer, Logroscino. He united all the separate scenes into one act, and performed an additional service to music by introducing the concerted finale, afterward to be so effectively employed in grand opera. But his reputation was merely local,[1] and it remained for a younger composer to bring the new form before the eyes of Europe.

Pergolesi (1710–1736) was the first whose

[1] Logroscino's works, more broadly comic than those of his rivals, were written in the local Neapolitan dialect; but so popular were they that they earned him the title of "Il Dio dell' Opera Buffa."

works in lighter vein became widely known. Writer of sacred music of unexampled freshness, composer of a successful *Opera Seria* ("Sallustia") in his twenty-second year, and author of delightful comedies, there is little doubt that he would have ranked as one of the world's great geniuses but for his early death. His chief *buffo* success, "La Serva Padrona," was written in 1734, and for many years remained the best example of its school. It deals with the schemes of the maid Serpina to win the hand of her master Pandolfo. After scolding him, bullying him, and wheedling him by turns, she finally makes use of the pretended attentions of Scapin, the valet, and piques Pandolfo into proposing, almost against his will. The orchestra was here limited to the simple string quartet, but the action was so sustained, and the music so lively and varied, that the unexampled success of the work was fully deserved.

Somewhat later and much more long-lived than Pergolesi was the Neapolitan Jomelli (1714–1774). Not especially famous in *Opera Buffa*, he achieved far greater renown in the field of serious opera and church music. Like Scarlatti, he was too much given to the employment of a learned style, and his later operas were condemned as deficient in melody. It is worth while to note, in passing, that the young Mozart first made this criticism,[1] and wrote home from Naples, in 1770, that Jomelli's operas were beautiful, but too elevated in style, and too antique, for the theatre.

In France there had been a sort of musical pantomime at the fairs of St. Laurent and St. Gervais, but nothing resembling light opera until the performance of "La Serva Padrona" in Paris in 1750. Its success there, when given between the acts of Lully's

[1] See Mozart's letter to his sister, page 74, in Edward Holmes's "Life of Mozart."

"Atys," at once aroused a controversy between the adherents of serious and comic opera, but this "Guerre des Bouffons" proved finally that the new style had come to stay. At first the only results were translations from the Italian, but in 1753 the great Rousseau [1] brought out "Le Devin du

[1] Castil Blaze, in his "Molière Musicien" (vol. ii., p. 409), apparently proves this opera to have been the work of a certain Granet, of Lyons. This Granet sent the libretto and music to Rousseau, but instead of reaching him, the opera came to a certain Pierre Rousseau. Before redirecting it, the recipient, himself something of a musician, showed it to his friend De Belissent, a conservator of the royal library. Great was their astonishment when Jean Jacques Rousseau palmed the work off as his own. The soi-disant composer remained carefully absent from the rehearsals, and allowed the singer Jeliotte to supply certain recitatives that were lacking. Granet meanwhile died, but Pierre and his friend openly accused Jean Jacques of fraud, in the columns of the *Journal Encyclopedique*. In reply, Rousseau undertook to write a second musical setting; but this new arrangement, not performed until after his death, was utterly without any musical knowledge or skill.

Mendel, however, in his generally reliable lexicon, states that Rameau, in speaking of an earlier work by Rousseau,

Village," and two years later the Neapolitan Duni won a Parisian success with his dainty "Ninette à la Cour."

The real founder of French *Opéra Comique*, however, was the native composer Monsigny (1729–1817). His long and successful career placed it on a firm basis, and fused the French and Italian schools into one. Between 1759 and 1777 he produced a number of works that met with constantly increasing success, and when he retired from the Opéra Comique in the latter year, he possessed ample renown and considerable fortune. Yet his music is not marked by any essential greatness; he had little technical training, and depended almost wholly on his instinct for dramatic truth and a felicitous vein of melodic brightness. His scores

said that parts of it were the work of a skilful musician, the rest merely the efforts of a tyro without the slightest knowledge of the rudiments of music; and that the accusations of plagiarism, founded on this criticism, were due to the malice of Baron Grimm, Von Holbach, and others.

were thin and poor, his themes lacking in all real musical interest; but his plays were far more natural and entertaining than the pompous grand operas of the period.

Grétry (1741–1813) followed in the path of Monsigny, and carried *Opéra Comique* to a still higher plane. Like his predecessor, he was unable to attain to any skill in the strict part-writing of the Italian teachers, and relied wholly on his melodic gifts. His comic operas are even more brilliant and sparkling than those of Monsigny, who apparently did not dare to reënter the field in competition with his younger rival. Of the fifty or more works that Grétry produced in Paris, the best known were "Le Tableau Parlant" (1769), "Zemire et Azor" (1771), and "L'Amant Jaloux" (1778), while "Richard Cœur de Lion" (1784) was a successful attempt to treat a more romantic and loftier theme. This last work is Grétry's masterpiece, for his talent was hardly adequate for

the still more vigorous librettos of his "Peter the Great" or "William Tell."

The great chess-player Philidor (1726–1795) was also an operatic composer of note, but his works, though well received, have not stood the test of time. He excelled his two contemporaries in originality, musical knowledge, harmony, and instrumentation, but he lacked true dramatic skill.

In Germany, after the prestige of the Hamburg school began to wane, there was little activity of any kind in the operatic field, although Karl Graun, at Berlin, duplicated Handel's London successes. But with the advent of Johann Adam Hiller, or Hüller (1728–1804), a form of light opera arose in Leipsic that fairly earned a national reputation. This was the *Singspiel*, a sort of popular vaudeville plentifully sprinkled with songs. Although the action took place partly in the spoken dialogue, the music was by no means unimportant, and Hiller showed considerable

skill in developing the German "Lied," in handling some rudimentary ensemble pieces, and in occasionally arranging an adequate dramatic *scena*. Probably Hiller adapted his ideas from the French operettas, but he stands completely acquitted of servile imitation. The best of his fourteen *Singspiele* held the stage for over a century, and are even now occasionally performed in Germany.

The first English light opera had its birth in a somewhat similar manner. In 1727 John Gay wrote a brilliant satire on the prevailing fashions, follies, and crimes of the day, calling it "The Beggar's Opera," [1] and Doctor Pepusch arranged the music from old English and Scotch tunes, together with many popular songs of the time. Probably sug-

[1] "The Beggar's Opera" was also an attempt to stem the rising tide of Italian opera which was at that time almost a craze in London. It parodied this school with much success.

gested by a remark of Swift, that "a Newgate pastoral might make an odd pretty sort of thing," this extravaganza had for its hero a daredevil highwayman named Captain Macheath. It was brought out in the next year, by John Rich, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and met with instant success, seriously interfering with Handel's operatic enterprises. So enormously popular did it become that it was given sixty-two performances during the first season, and its enthusiastic reception occasioned the remark that it made Gay rich and Rich gay. It remained in vogue for many years, and became the model on which the so-called ballad-operas were founded.

Although all the civilised countries of Europe could boast indigenous forms of light opera, the Italian school was the one that possessed the most lasting qualities, and it gradually assumed a sway in all the leading capitals. The traditions of the Neapolitan school, as exemplified by Scarlatti, Greco,

Porpora, and the German Hasse, were more or less ably upheld by their successors, of whom the most renowned were Traetta, Vinci (the artist), Piccini, Sacchini, Guglielmi, and many others, besides Pergolesi and Jomelli. Most of these composers excelled not only in the old-style *Opera Seria*, but in the new *Opera Buffa* as well. Piccini, especially, did excellent work, and made many improvements in the simple finales of Logroscino. Piccini seems to have been a musician of unusual attainments, and but for his unfortunate encounter with Gluck he would have achieved far greater fame than fell to his lot. Edwards justly says: "Gluck was a composer of larger conceptions and of more powerful genius than his Italian rival; and it may be said that he built up monuments of stone while Piccini was laying out parterres of flowers. But if the flowers were beautiful while they lasted, what does it matter to the eighteenth century that they are dead now,

when even the marble temples of Gluck are antiquated and moss-grown ?" [1]

But the greatest name among the later Neapolitans was Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801). Born of poor working people, he managed to attend for eleven years the celebrated Conservatorio Santa Maria di Loretto, and his first work, in 1772, won him at once a high place among composers. From that time until 1787 he produced dozens of operas, some in rivalry to Paisiello. Called to the court of St. Petersburg by Catherine II., his amazing fertility continued unabated. In Vienna, at the court of Leopold II., he brought forth his greatest work, "Il Matrimonio Segreto" (1792). This piece, which soon won for itself the position formerly occupied by Pergolesi's "Serva Padrona," is replete with a melodic grace and delicious humour that are eminently attractive even to-day.

[1] Sutherland Edwards, "History of the Opera," p. 296.

The story, simple yet full of amusing situations, deals with the troubles of Paolino, a young lawyer who has secretly married Carolina, the daughter of the rich but avaricious Geronimo. To ingratiate himself with his unsuspecting father-in-law, he tries to arrange a marriage between his rich friend, Count Robinson, and Geronimo's other daughter, Elisetta. But Robinson prefers Carolina, and to her father's delight proposes for her, while Paolino becomes the object of an unsought admiration on the part of the elderly Fidalma, Geronimo's sister. The young couple are discovered in an attempted flight, and the paternal wrath bursts out in full force; but gradually Geronimo is brought to accept the situation, while Robinson accepts Elisetta.

The music of this work, like that of most of the composer's seventy-six operas, represents the highest development of its kind in Italy. If not quite as rich in depth and

expression as the matchless melodies of Mozart, Cimarosa's works displayed an unequalled freshness and variety of material, and his light operas possessed in the highest degree that direct liveliness, and merry, chattering loquacity that marks the best Italian *buffo* work. His chief strength lay in the vocal parts, but he handled his orchestra with skill and delicacy, and his ensembles were often masterly. Of his serious operas, the best was "Gli Orazi e Curiazi," but it proved somewhat lacking in depth, and, in spite of a favourable reception, was gradually forgotten.

Paisiello (1741–1815) was even more prolific than Cimarosa, but his works were less enduring. Some of them, when revived recently in Rome, aroused genuine enthusiasm, but the great majority are now permanently laid on the shelf. Paisiello deserves mention as being the first composer who made free use of the concerted finale in *Opera Seria.*

The immense popularity of light opera needs no explanation. If beauty is its own excuse for being, certainly mirth may claim an equal right of existence. The comic muse is more easily understood than the tragic, and if Melpomene wins our admiration, Thalia will always succeed in gaining our sympathy as well. But there was still another reason for the success of *Opera Buffa;* the absurdities of the serious form drove the public to take refuge in the lighter vein, just as surely as they caused the reforms of Gluck. It is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and the musicians of the early part of the eighteenth century had certainly taken this fatal step. Grétry asserted that during his sojourn in Rome, a period covering several years, he never saw a serious opera succeed. "If the theatre was crowded," he said, "it was to hear a certain singer; when he left the stage, the people in the boxes played cards, or ate ices,

and those in the pit yawned." [1] But in light opera, despite an arbitrary arrangement of characters at first, there were no formal and meaningless rules, and the natural genius of librettist and composer were allowed free play. No wonder, then, that the form has withstood the ravages of time, and survives even to the present day.

[1] See Philip Hale, "Operatic Extravagances," in Boston Symphony Programme Book, 1901.

CHAPTER IV.

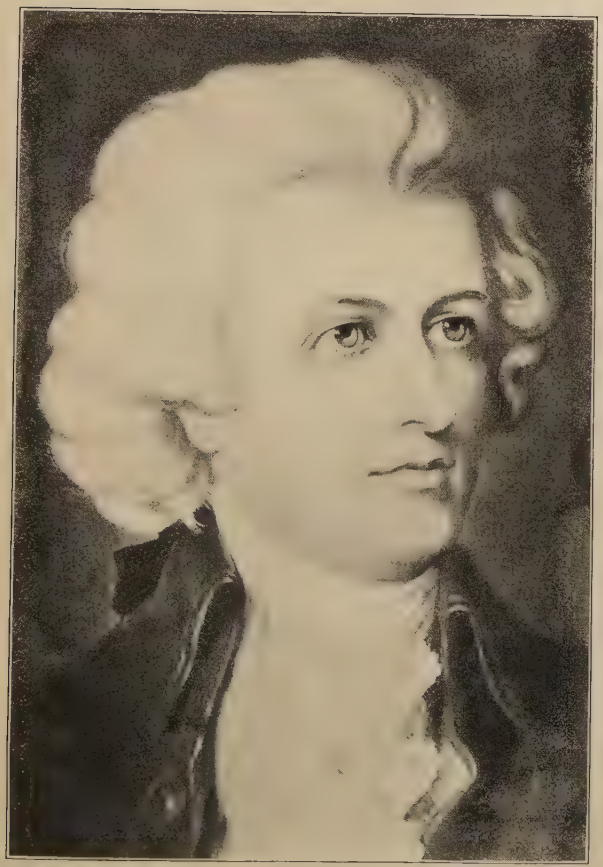
MOZART AND HIS WORKS.

JUST as the development of serious opera culminated for the time being in the reforms of Gluck, so the more melodic vein of light opera reached its climax in the works of Mozart. There was this difference, however, that while Gluck's mission lay in correcting wrong tendencies, Mozart was able and willing to proceed along the old lines, and his work may be regarded as the legitimate outcome of the constant improvements in the attractive school of *Opera Buffa.* But the student may well refrain from assigning to Mozart any definite place in a set scheme of operatic development. His greatness is not due to the fact that he arrived on the scene at any particular period, but depends

wholly on his truly immeasurable genius. Yet he had no detailed scheme of composition, no elaborate theories, and was quite content to bring opera to the highest pitch of perfection admitted by existing conditions.

John Chrysostom Wolfgang Theophilus Mozart, better known as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, "Composer by the grace of God," was born in the little town of Salzburg, in 1756. His father, Leopold Mozart, had risen to be one of the chief musicians of the archbishop, and managed to maintain his household decently, in spite of the incredibly small salaries paid at that epoch. On starting to train his seven-year-old daughter, Maria Anna, at the clavier,[1] he soon found in her indications of unusual ability, and in fact she afterward became the greatest woman pianist of her day. But more marvellous still were the accomplishments of

[1] Clavier is a general term for keyboard instruments; doubtless in this case it refers to the spinet.



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

her gifted brother, four years her junior. He was present at her earliest lessons, and his memory for bright passages, and marked fondness for picking out harmonious intervals, led the wise old *Kapellmeister* to give his son a little instruction, half in sport. The boy's genius became apparent almost at once. His teachers seemed unable to tell him anything that he did not already know by instinct, and so remarkable were his gifts that he did not merely learn to play, but actually thought in music. At the age of four he began to compose little pieces, and two years later his father discovered him busily at work over the ink-smeared manuscript of an original clavier concerto.

Encouraged by the progress of his children, the father determined to travel with them. The account of this and other journeys of the young composer, covering a period of seventeen years, is not only of great interest as showing his own develop-

ment, but is full of vivid descriptions of the music and musicians of the time. At first, in Vienna, the two child-prodigies won instant favor at court, especially the frankly affectionate boy. Driven away by an attack of scarlet fever, Wolfgang's next three years were spent in longer tours, this time extending to Paris, London, and Holland. On these trips the child performed wonders. At Versailles, he actually accompanied a lady who sang from memory a song that he did not know, and, after following her correctly, performed a set of variations on the melody that amazed all hearers. In London, he played at sight for the king difficult pieces by Bach, Wagenseil, and others, besides improvising melodies on a ground bass of Handel. His organ playing gained no less admiration than his performances on the harpsichord, while the various sets of sonatas composed during these trips won him fame in a new direction.

Arriving at Salzburg, he wrote his first

operatic venture, "Bastien et Bastienne." A greater work came into being at Vienna, in 1768, where he received court orders to write an opera, and produced "La Finta Semplice." But the jealousy of other musicians, now fairly aroused by the unlucky boy of twelve, prevented its performance, and the family party returned to their servile position in Salzburg, poor in purse and robbed of their expected glory.[1]

A trip to Italy was more successful in gaining the admiration due to the rising genius. Mozart's Italian travels (1770–1773, with a short return home in 1772) resulted in a series of triumphs such as no artist, before or since, has ever received. His two

[1] The taste in Vienna was low, despite the recent production of Gluck's "Alceste." Leopold Mozart writes: "That the Viennese in general have no taste for serious and sensible things, indeed, have no notion of them, is well known; and their theatre, in which nothing prevails but childish trash, such as dances, devils, ghosts, witches, Jack-puddings, and harlequinades, proves it."

new operas for Milan, "Mitridate" (1771) and "Lucio Silla" (1773), won veritable ovations, and ranked with the best Italian compositions, while everywhere he received honours and diplomas, including knighthood in the Order of the Golden Spur, which Gluck esteemed so highly. Of Mozart's many feats of phenomenal ability, perhaps the greatest was his correct reproduction, after one hearing, of the celebrated Allegri[1] Miserere of the Sistine Chapel. His letters to his sister at home, besides showing a most exuberant gaiety and enjoyment of life, abounded in sage comments on the music in vogue, and bright descriptions of the singers and performances. His audiences gave innumerable tributes of admiration to him, all the way from the people, who called

[1] Allegri (1580–1652) was a writer of sacred music that vies with the works of Palestrina in nobility. This "Miserere" displays the most intricate part-writing, rendering Mozart's act apparently impossible.

him *Il Cavaliere Filarmonico,* and the nobles, who fêted him, to Padre Martini, who was lost in amazement at his ease in extemporising fugues, and Hasse, who predicted, "This boy will throw us all into the shade."

On his return, Mozart was commissioned to write an opera for the Munich carnival of 1775. Doubtless fully aroused by the splendour of the occasion, he produced "La Finta Giardiniera" with such success that Schubart, the poet, who was present, exclaimed that Mozart would be "the greatest operatic composer that ever lived." But despite his blushing honours, the young genius found living none too easy, for the new Archbishop of Salzburg, not endowed with an appreciation of good music, declined to give him any increase over the stipend of his childhood, — about five dollars a year![1] For a time

[1] The salaries of composers were in decided contrast to those of singers, as may be seen from Caffarelli's $9,000 for three months in London.

Mozart struggled to dispel the indifference of his master, writing the opera "Il Re Pastore" (1775) and many instrumental compositions; but he was finally driven to make another effort to obtain some foreign court position.[1] His stay at Munich was merely a case of hope deferred, and at Mannheim, where he met Abt Vogler and tried the newly perfected pianos, he fared no better. He made quite a stay in Paris, where he seemed unable to win the public away from the excitement of the Gluck-Piccini contest.[2]

[1] In . . . varied styles did he entertain the court of Salzburg, where his talents were never undervalued till he sought to be remunerated for them. Then, however, he was told, and in no measured terms, that his productions were worthless, and that he ought to go to a conservatorio in Italy to learn how to compose! — *Holmes, Life of Mozart*, p. 100.

[2] Holmes (p. 141) says that the declamatory style of Gluck's operas often led poor performers to mistake ear-piercing shrieks and cries for expressive singing, and the composer himself was nicknamed *Le Grand Hurleur*. The sublime disregard of pitch shown by some of the

After inveighing against French indifference in manners and lack of taste in art, he declined a minor position in the royal orchestra ("Whoever enters the royal service," he wrote home, "is forgotten at Paris"), and persevered in his fruitless efforts to gain a livelihood by composing. After the death of his mother, who was with him, he received word from Salzburg that at last the miserly prelate had relented, and offered the young composer a salary of five hundred florins, which, together with his father's pay, would yield the family a total of over one thousand florins (about $400). This meagre pittance brought the wanderer home, in 1779.

lesser Wagnerian singers to-day is an interesting repetition of the same error.

Concerning Parisian taste, Mozart writes home: "If I were in a place where people had ears to hear, hearts to feel, and some small degree of perception and taste, I should laugh heartily over all these things; but really, as it regards music, I am living among mere brute beasts." — *Nissen, Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, p. 368.

After a year or more of life under the degrading conditions of the archbishop's service, Mozart again received the honourable task of composing the grand opera for the Munich carnival, in 1781.[1] Here he brought out a work that was a distinct advance over the style of Cimarosa, Piccini, and the followers of Scarlatti, — one that also decided his destiny as a composer of operas.[2] This work, "Idomeneo," at last exemplified the fulness of melodic grace, dramatic insight, and choral dignity that became so evident in the later works of the composer. Its libretto, modelled on that of an earlier opera by Campra, deals with the Grecian legend of

[1] An unperformed work of the Salzburg days, entitled "Zaide," formed the basis of much that was good in both "Idomeneo" and "Die Entfuehrung."

[2] Up to this time Mozart's work had been wholly imitative. The wonderful facility with which he caught up any style is alluded to by his father in a letter to Paris, in which the latter advises the young composer to make use of this faculty and write according to the reigning French fashion.

Idomeneus, King of Crete. Overtaken by a storm on his return from the Trojan war, he vows to sacrifice to Neptune the life of the first man he shall meet on shore. This proves to be his son, Idamante. The king tries to evade his vow by sending Idamante off with Electra to rule Argos, but as the pair embark, a storm arises and a sea-monster devastates the land. The terrified people force the king to produce the victim, but meanwhile Idamante kills the monster. Ilia, the beloved of Idamante, tries to sacrifice herself for him, and Neptune then decrees that Idamante shall be spared, and rule Crete with Ilia as queen. The opera made a decisive success, and in the power of its choruses and variety of its solo concerted work surpassed anything on the stage.

Meanwhile its composer had been living in the archbishop's suite, at Vienna, with no more privileges than the veriest underling. Dining with the servants, he was daily sub-

jected to every indignity that his master chose to heap on him, and often became a target for such contemptuous names as "Gassenbube," "Lump," "Lausbube," "Fex," and so on.[1] At last the situation became unendurable, and Mozart threw off the yoke.

Despite the imperial favour, indifference or intrigue kept him from obtaining any new appointment, so he was forced to depend upon performing and composing. At this time he carried out a long-cherished idea, — the production of a German opera, for the national theatre at Vienna. The old *Singspiel* had been altered by Reichardt into a verbal drama with music in the unimportant parts, and by George Benda into a melodrama, or spoken piece with musical accompaniment. Mozart clung to the earlier form, making the action take place with

[1] These German terms of abuse, not always easy to translate, may be freely rendered by "guttersnipe," "churl," "varlet," and "fool."

full accompaniment of the most attractive music, and relegating the spoken dialogue to unimportant episodes. The result was that his work, "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" (1782), placed German opera on the same plane to which "Idomeneo" had raised Italian opera.

According to its libretto, Belmont, with his servant Pedrillo, traces his beloved Constance to the house of the Pasha Selim, who has carried her off. While Belmont enters in the disguise of an architect, to liberate Constance, Pedrillo drugs the major-domo Osmin, and rescues his own sweetheart, Constance's maid Blondchen. The flight of the two couples is discovered, and they are brought back, but the soft-hearted pasha is touched by their fidelity, and pardons them.

After Mozart's marriage with Constance Weber (sister of his earlier Mannheim favourite, Aloysia), he returned for a time to Salzburg. *Opera Buffa*, as exemplified by

Paisiello and Sarti, had again become the fashion, and he started two works of this sort, "L'Oca del Cairo" and "Lo Sposo Deluso." These he never completed, but, after a series of successful concert seasons in Vienna, he wrote a second German opera, this time the comedietta "Der Schauspieldirektor" (1786). The new work, however, was soon forgotten in the performance of one of his greatest masterpieces, "Le Nozze di Figaro" (1786).

The libretto, by the great dramatist Da Ponte, contains little of the political significance of the original comedy of Beaumarchais, but deals more with its humourous side. Figaro, the valet of Count Almaviva, is to marry Suzanna, who is maid to the countess and object of excessive admiration from the count. The page Cherubino, in disgrace, comes to Suzanna to entreat her influence, but is interrupted by the approach of the count. Hiding behind a chair, Cherubino

overhears the count's proposals to Suzanna, which in their turn are interrupted by the music-master, Basilio. The count now hides behind the chair, while the page slips around to the front and is covered with a robe by Suzanna. Basilio, in repeating the count's wishes, alludes to Cherubino's passion for the countess, and Almaviva, infuriated, discloses himself to arrange for the page's instant dismissal. Cherubino is now betrayed by a sneeze, but as he has evidently overheard all the count's proposals, the latter dare not discharge him, but instead plans to get him off the scene by giving him an army commission.

The countess, Suzanna, and Figaro then concoct a scheme to discomfit the count, by dressing the page in Suzanna's costume and arranging an appointment for the count with the disguised youth. The count enters unexpectedly, giving Cherubino barely time to lock himself in an inner room. Hearing a noise, the count rushes out for an

axe to break the door, and in his absence Suzanna takes Cherubino's place, while the latter jumps out of the window. The count is mortified by finding Suzanna alone in the inner room, and Figaro explains away all suspicious circumstances, when suddenly the old duenna Marcellina enters with a written promise of marriage from Figaro, given her long ago in lieu of an old debt. The count, delighted at the removal of an obstacle to his wishes, promises that she shall get her rights.

In the next act, however, Figaro turns out to be the long-lost son of Marcellina. The conspirators then carry out their pretended assignation, with the countess in Suzanna's costume. Cherubino gets snubbed for his advances, the count avows his passion to his own wife, and Figaro in revenge makes exaggerated declarations to Suzanna, the supposed countess. The final unveiling brings about pardon, reconciliation, and Figaro's marriage with Suzanna.



SCENE FROM "LE NOZZE DI FIGARO."

Of the musical setting of this vivacious comedy it is impossible to speak except in superlative terms. Some of the most delicious of Mozart's melodies are to be found in it. Where every number is delightful, it seems unnecessary to mention single selections; but Figaro's lively duet with Suzanna, his rollicking defiance of the count ("Se vuol ballare"), his inimitably droll lesson in soldiery to Cherubino, the latter's singing lesson ("Voi che sapete"), the countess's beautiful aria of regret ("Dove sono"), her letter duet with Suzanna, and Suzanna's entrancing invitation to the count ("Deh vieni"), are scenes of surpassing attractiveness even to-day, and are replete with the charm of direct liveliness that is so often lacking in the overharmonised tone pictures of the present. In this opera, too, Mozart's consummate mastery of appropriate ensemble passages is displayed time and again, and even more attractive than any single number is the exhilarating brightness

of the music as a whole, and its constant fitness to the ever-shifting mazes of the dainty plot. The inhabitants of Vienna went wild with delight on its production, and the emperor finally had to prohibit encores in order to have the piece performed within reasonable limits of time.

Yet all this success was of little practical good to Mozart. He was still forced to subsist by giving lessons and concerts. The novelty of "Figaro" wore off gradually, and the public transferred its fickle admiration to Dittersdorf's "Doktor und Apotheker," and Martin's "Cosa Rara." It was a welcome diversion to Mozart, therefore, when he was called to Prague to produce his "Figaro" there and receive an overwhelming ovation from the public. Still more satisfactory was the order he received to compose a new opera for that place.

"Don Giovanni" (1787), the result of his Prague success, was, like "Figaro," com-

posed to a libretto by Da Ponte. Don Giovanni, a licentious Spanish nobleman, invades the room of Donna Anna, kills her father, Don Pedro, the Commandant of Seville, and escapes unrecognised. Donna Elvira, an earlier victim, appears, and taxes Don Giovanni with cruelty; whereupon Leporello, his servant, horrifies her with a list of his master's many conquests. Don Giovanni, meanwhile, lays siege to Zerlina, a pretty peasant girl about to marry Masetto; but Anna and her betrothed, Don Ottavio, accompany Elvira to Don Giovanni's masked ball, and save Zerlina from her fate.

In the next act, Don Giovanni exchanges costumes with Leporello, and lays siege to Elvira's maid, while Leporello, owing to his disguise, is pursued by Masetto and receives a beating intended for his master. After the pair have escaped from these new adventures, Don Giovanni indulges in drunken bravado before the statue of the murdered

Don Pedro. The statue speaks, warning Don Giovanni of his impending doom, but he is unabashed, and invites it to sup with him. The next night, at supper, the statue enters in the midst of the revelry, and bids him repent. On his refusal, the earth opens and he is dragged into the pit by demons.

The public of Prague received this with renewed acclamations, but its libretto, despite its expression of more varied phases of human passion, is less dramatically coherent than that of "Figaro." If "Don Giovanni" is to be taken as Mozart's greatest opera (a title which posterity has accorded to it), the reason must be sought for rather in the many detailed beauties of the music itself than in the dramatic unity of the piece. Besides, it is more of a display opera than the others, demanding three great sopranos, a basso buffo, and a powerful baritone. But although the opera, judged by modern standards, is somewhat lacking in continuity, the

many wonderful and intensely expressive melodies, and the infinite skill shown in the score,[1] have gone far to justify the classicists in esteeming this work so highly. The mere mention of Leporello's "Catalogue Aria," or Zerlina's "Batti, Batti," and "Vedrai Carino," is sufficient to remind every musician that Don Giovanni represents the climax of the melodic school of opera.[2]

Returning to Vienna at the time of

[1] The only point that is at all archaic in modern performances of "Don Giovanni" is the piano accompaniment to some of the recitatives.

[2] Holmes says of this work (p. 301): "Whether we regard the mixture of passions in its concerted music, the profound expression of melancholy, the variety of its situations, the beauty of its accompaniment, or the grandeur of its heightening and protracted scene of terror, — the finale of the second act, — 'Don Giovanni' stands alone in dramatic eminence. Of all musical romances it is certainly the first." If the opera seems tedious to-day, it is not from any lack of charm or appropriateness in the music, but because modern realism has altered our dramatic conventions, and modern taste demands rich harmonies.

Gluck's death, Mozart was still unable to obtain any lucrative post, although he was appointed dance-composer to the emperor, at $400 per annum, to prevent him from carrying out his plan of migrating to England.[1] His situation seemed to go from bad to worse, despite his fame. For the next two years he spent his time in writing the last and greatest of the symphonies and

[1] Parsimony to musicians seems to have been the traditional policy of the house of Austria. An old minstrel rhyme of the twelfth century speaks thus of Rudolph of Hapsburg:

> "King Rudolph is a worthy king,
> All praise to him be brought;
> He likes to hear the masters play and sing,
> But after that he gives them nought."

In Mozart's case, the emperor consulted his page, Strak, to find what sum would be enough to retain a man in Mozart's sphere of life. This Strak, who had been a welcome guest at Mozart's house, might have done the struggling genius a great service, but instead, he used a courtier's tact, and named a low figure to please his master. The promises of future reward that went with the appointment were never meant to be fulfilled.

other instrumental works that have made him famous, and in bringing out vocal music with his friend Von Swieten. A visit to Berlin and other places, with Prince Lichnowsky, brought more glory, but no financial benefit, though at Potsdam King Frederick made the composer a tempting offer. Mozart's return to Vienna gained a fresh commission from the emperor, but no permanent post. The new opera, "Cosi Fan Tutte," appeared in 1790, and attained less success than its two predecessors. Its libretto, mediocre in character, deals with the wager of an old cynic with two young officers that their wives will prove inconstant. The two husbands depart, and return disguised. Each one finds the other's wife faithful at first, but in the end the women give way. The play ends in discovery, repentance, and reconciliation. The music is delightful, but of more conventional character than might have been expected.

The emperor's death left Mozart worse off than ever, for the new prince cared little for music. A final tour proved unproductive, and a new opera, "La Clemenza di Tito" (1791), written for the coronation, made little impression. Its libretto (by Metastasio) was in the old *Opera Seria* form, and the music was written during an illness that eventually proved fatal to the composer. The plot of this work deals with the schemes of Vitellia, daughter of the deposed Vitellius, to overthrow Titus. That emperor, after barely escaping being burned to death, pardons the conspirators, and returns good for evil by rewarding Vitellia with his hand.

Mozart's last work, "Die Zauberflöte" (1791), raised German opera to a high level, but the absurdities of the libretto prevented its gaining a place beside the two great plays of Da Ponte. These absurdities are explained by the fact that they have a definite masonic significance, but this does

not make them any more interesting to the layman. Mozart wrote the work as a favour to his intimate friend Schickaneder, the theatre manager, who afterward repaid the author by breaking a promise to him and selling the score to other managers. It is now known that the libretto was at first founded on a fable in Wieland's "Dschinnistan," but altered when the same plot appeared in a rival play of the time, and arranged to display some of Schickaneder's old stage properties. This fact goes far to account for its disjointed nature.[1]

The scene is laid in ancient Egypt. Sarastro, the high priest of Isis, has persuaded Pamina to leave her mother, the wicked "Queen of the Night," and be trained in wisdom. The queen's servants save Tamino,

[1] For a full account of the source of the plot, its original form, and all the subsequent alterations, see p. 594 *et seq.* in Vol. IV. of Jahn's compendious biography of Mozart.

a foreign prince, from a dangerous serpent, and in return he sets out to bring back Pamina. Presented with a magic flute, and accompanied by the bird-catcher Papageno, he departs. But instead of bringing back the princess, Tamino is himself forced to become a disciple, and goes through a severe and spectacular probation. At length he is proved worthy, and marries Pamina, while Papageno also finds a mate. The music to this impossible fairy tale is fully up to the standard of Mozart's best works, and the melodies have all the usual brightness and sparkle. Especially noteworthy are the queen's brilliant numbers, Sarastro's great bass solos, and the lively passages of Papageno. But the trivial libretto has been too great a handicap, and the opera is now seldom given.

Mozart died in Vienna on December 5, 1791, at the age of thirty-five.[1] His last

[1] The disease that carried off the composer was variously called miliary fever, inflammatory rheumatic

years had been full of constant struggles against poverty and continual disappointments about his works. His genius was actually too great for the public to appreciate, and while lesser men grew rich by printing trivial compositions, Mozart's publishers declined many of his best works as too learned. His constant craving for liveliness, combined with his uncertain income, made him always ready to enjoy the passing

fever, consumption, and malignant typhus. The post-mortem examination showed nothing unusual except inflammation of the brain. Mozart's own assertion, that he had been poisoned, was always treated as a delusion, but the idea became current, and suspicion fell on Salieri, Mozart's bitterest enemy. So strong did this feeling become, that Salieri, on his death-bed, deemed it necessary to make a solemn deposition of his innocence. The unknown stranger who came to commission Mozart for his final requiem aroused much comment, and was thought by Mozart to be a messenger from the other world. It has since been proven that he was the steward of Count Walsegg, a rich musical amateur. Nissen (p. 570 in "Mozart's Biographie") gives Mozart's irregular life as the cause of his early death.

moment, and his companions, chosen for their gaiety, were not always of the best. He was the most tender-hearted and affectionate of men, and in return for his natural kindliness the world treated him with contempt and slander during his life, and gave him a pauper's grave in death. The contrast seems only heightened by the fact that just at the last, when his prospects appeared to brighten, he was no longer able to take advantage of the favourable offers that came to him from Holland.

Of his works, time has only strengthened the opinion that they are the expression of the most consummate master the world has ever seen. If they are built on a less grandiose scale than the more modern outbursts of harmony, they still remain models of musical perfection in their way, and they combine the utmost skill with a natural grace of melodic expression that has never been equalled before or since. If Mozart did not

reform the drama as Gluck did (though the latter did not produce "Orfeo" until three years older than the dying Mozart), he brought to its service such finished learning, such intuitive insight into the true character of music, that he was undoubtedly the foremost composer of his time, and would probably have been the world's greatest genius, had fate placed him in any other epoch.

CHAPTER V.

CLASSICAL OPERA.

The question of what sort of music should be employed in opera is a fundamental one, and has given rise to more controversies, heart-burnings, and recriminations than any other matter, since it lies at the root of all differences between schools or individuals. In the earliest times, we find a declamatory style; in the works of the Venetians, melody asserts itself; with Scarlatti, musical learning is pressed into service; in the epoch of Handel, a conventional form dominates the stage; the efforts of Gluck bring back something of the earlier dramatic style, with vastly increased resources in the orchestra; Mozart reverts again to a more melodic

method, enforcing it with correct expression and consummate orchestral skill. There can be no doubt that the best results in all these different styles would be due, not merely to the use of good music, but also to its proper adaptation to the dramatic situation. Whether a libretto be worthy or not is hardly a question for the musical critic, though of course it has much to do with the popularity of the opera.

In the days of the eighteenth century, the drama was a much more conventional affair than at present. With England a prey to the cunning artifice of the Pope-Dryden group of poets, France but lately emerged from the courtly superficialities of *Le Grand Monarque*, Germany still in the grasp of Paris fashions, and Italy possessing little of the earlier Renaissance vitality, it was no wonder that literature did not show any of the free exuberance of thought that came later in the Romanticism of the nineteenth

century. So even under the best circumstances there was an amount of conventionality in all the earlier librettos that forced the audiences of their day to judge largely by the music. To quote a later saying, "Whatever was too silly to be spoken could be sung."

When the classical period in musical history appeared, with the advent of the symphonic school, and the full orchestral resources were employed to mingle intellectual and emotional effects in their proper balance by uniting melody with harmony, it is not surprising to find a school of operatic composers who reflected the spirit of their time. They devoted all their study and inspiration to the task of producing the best possible music, and employing it in an effort to raise the standard of the stage. If their operas are seldom given to-day, it is because these works are both too good and not good enough; too good for an unthinking public

that considers opera merely intended to tickle its ears with melody, and not good enough to hold their own against the great advance in dramatic realism that has taken place since their day. When they appeared, however, their librettos possessed a passionate intensity that was new on the stage, and their pure and lofty harmonies were synonymous with all that was best in classical music. It is a significant fact that Germany, the country that is most appreciative of "pure music" (*i. e.* instrumental compositions without the extraneous aid of any plot), should be the place where these works are most warmly received to-day.

The first of the composers to whom this lengthy preamble is dedicated was Cherubini. Born in Florence, in 1760, he soon proved himself a genius, and by the age of twenty he had become thoroughly proficient in the old sacred style that gave Italy its renown. During the next eight years "a

change came o'er the spirit of the scene," and our young enthusiast left the straight and narrow path, and devoted himself to the production of conventional Italian operas. In 1788, however, after settling in Paris, he deliberately discarded the light Neapolitan style, and in his first French work, "Demophon," showed marked indications of the grandeur he was destined to attain in his later operas. His Parisian career thus began within a decade of Gluck's departure, and he, rather than the indecisive Salieri, is the logical successor of the German reformer. Despite the ignorance of the military leaders during the Revolution, and the opposition of Napoleon in the Consulate, Cherubini remained master of the musical situation in Paris, and Paris was dramatically in advance of the rest of the world.

If "Demophon" was an interesting suggestion, rather than a successful achievement, its promise was amply fulfilled with

the production of "Lodoiska," in 1791. This work, which made its composer famous throughout the world, obliterated in an instant the melodious trifles that had been in vogue since Gluck's departure. Its deep earnestness, its profound learning, its harmonic and melodic richness, and its great dramatic strength won instant approval, and kept the piece on the boards for nearly two hundred times during its first year. Its story, rather poorly arranged, deals with the efforts of Lodoiska's lover to rescue her from the castle of a more powerful rival, and introduces an assault by Tartars at the close, to make a diversion that ensures her final escape.

After "Eliza" (1794) came a still greater success, in the shape of "Medée" (1797). Its grandeur and classic proportion rendered it a masterpiece, while its tremendous dramatic strength and sublimity won general admiration. Yet the opera at first was not

a success, — no doubt because its music was too harmonic to suit the masses. Its weak points are a poor libretto, a decided monotony in its general tone, and a too complete centring of interest in the title rôle.

Three years later (1800) came another great production, "Les Deux Journées." The action of this opera takes place in the time of Cardinal Mazarin, and deals with the fortunes of the deputy Armand, who has incurred the enmity of that prelate. The gates of Paris are strictly guarded, and all precautions are taken to prevent Armand's escape. He is saved from capture by the water-carrier Mikeli, whose son he had once befriended, and he makes his way out of the city concealed in Mikeli's water-cart. In the neighbouring village of Gonesse, however, he is captured by the cardinal's troops while protecting his wife Constance from the rudeness of two soldiers. The dénoue-

ment comes in the shape of a pardon from the queen, and all ends happily.

The style of the music is so genial and natural, so full of warmth of feeling and expressive charm, that it must undoubtedly rank as Cherubini's best opera. The attacks on the declamatory style of "Medée" were hardly justified here, for, as Fétis says, "There is a copiousness of melody in Cherubini, especially in 'Les Deux Journées;' but such is the richness of the accompanying harmony, and the brilliant colouring of the instrumentation, . . . that the merit of the melody was not appreciated at its just value." A more modern writer (Ritter), in reference to this and other operas of the composer, says, "They will remain for the earnest student a classic source of exquisite artistic enjoyment, and serve as models of a perfect mastery over the deepest resources and means that the rich field of musical art presents."

The only later work of Cherubini that needs mention here is "Faniska," brought out in Vienna in 1806. Founded on a plot somewhat similar to "Lodoiska," it won instant success, and among the crowd that thronged to its *première* were Beethoven and Haydn, both of whom were anxious to bear homage to the truly great composer. He produced several other operas in Paris, all more or less successful. Concerning "Les Abencerrages," Mendelssohn wrote that he could not sufficiently "admire the sparkling fire, the clever original phrasing, the extraordinary delicacy and refinement with which the whole is written, or feel grateful enough to the grand old man for it." The latter part of Cherubini's long career was devoted to teaching and sacred compositions, and at his death, in 1842, his fame in church music rivalled his reputation in opera.

The works of Mehul (1763–1817) and

Lesueur (1763–1837) are the only ones of the time that ranked with Cherubini's. Mehul, especially, was successful in continuing and improving the grand style of Gluck, and his operas are marked everywhere by a powerful directness that is not inappropriate to the stormy days of the Revolution. Lesueur possessed a certain large simplicity of style, but his works are somewhat less effective than those of his compeer.

The logical successor of Cherubini was Spontini (1774–1851). Born at Majolati, he soon devoted himself to the study of music, and in 1791 entered a Neapolitan conservatory. After several years of Italian operatic triumphs, he, too, decided to try his fortunes in Paris, and in 1803 he entered the gay capital. The next year saw the production of his first French effort, the one-act opera "Milton." Three years afterward he produced the masterpiece that gained immortality for him in the musical world, — "La

Vestale." His renown was increased by "Fernando Cortez" (1809), but after this he brought forth nothing worthy of mention for ten years, and even his "Olympie" (1819) can hardly compare with the two earlier works. Spontini professed a great admiration for Mozart, but his music is a direct outcome of the chaste simplicity of Gluck's style. Unlike Cherubini, he showed the prevailing fault of the Italian race, — one that has been evident in opera until within the last three decades of the nineteenth century, — a lack of the harmonic sense. This very "instinct for the logic of harmony" is just what has caused the greatness of modern music in the classical and subsequent periods, so it is not surprising to find Spontini's works on the shelf at present. Yet in his day he was without a rival in popular favour, and his compositions exerted undoubted influence on such diverse natures as Wagner and Meyerbeer.

The other French composers of this time, although worthy of more than a passing attention, were less definitely under the influence of the classical style that was even then known as "German music." Henri Montan Berton, son of that Pierre Berton who tried to make peace between Gluck and Piccini, occupied a respectable, but not pre-eminent, position in comic opera. Catel (1773–1830) displayed much elegance and purity of style, but unfortunately acquired a professorial reputation for writing "learned music." Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1825) composed operas that were pleasing, if not ambitious, but is better known as a master of the violin. Persuis (1769–1819) wrote much that is now forgotten, and remains in history as a great orchestral leader. More important was the work of Nicolo Isouard (1777–1818), popularly known as Nicolo. He had little originality, and much of his music was commonplace, but some passages

of his "Joconde" and "Cendrillon" show great tenderness and charm.

The master of *opéra comique* during this period was Boieldieu (1775–1834). Many of his earlier works were too trivial to last, but "Ma Tante Aurore" (1803) brought him into popular favour, and his two great works, "Jean de Paris" (1812) and "La Dame Blanche" (1825), placed him securely at the head of his school. The latter opera is founded on episodes from Scott's "Monastery" and "Guy Mannering," but, like the novels of the immortal romancer, it is cast in a form that is too lengthy to suit modern standards. Boieldieu's music shows much melodic beauty, though its tenderness often degenerates into sentimentality. He was the last representative of the school of Grétry and Monsigny, as after him came the deluge of Italianism that is usually associated with the name of Rossini.

In Germany, the successors of Mozart at

first produced little of enduring value. Süssmayer, his pupil (1766–1803), displayed a melodic facility and a peculiar popular charm, but his works lack depth and originality. Winter (1754–1825) was strong in declamation and chorus work, but is best remembered by his church music. Weigl (1766–1846) won much appreciation by his tuneful "Schweizer Familie." Dittersdorf (1739–99) carried on the earlier traditions of the *Singspiel*, and displayed real brightness and vivacity in his comedies. But the only worthy example of the more serious and lofty operatic style was Beethoven's solitary opera, "Fidelio," produced in 1805.

The libretto, a translation from the French, had already been used, notably in Paer's "Eleonora." According to the story, Florestan, a Spanish nobleman, has become the captive of his bitterest enemy, Pizarro. In the state prison, of which the latter has

charge, Florestan is confined in a cell without light or air, utterly at Pizarro's mercy. Leonore, wife of the prisoner, has in some way discovered her husband's plight, and, in the hope of aiding him to escape, she disguises herself in male attire, and, under the name of Fidelio, enters the service of Rocco, the head jailer. She soon wins the admiration of the jailer's daughter, Marcellina, who neglects her former lover, Jacquino, for the sake of the handsome stranger. Meanwhile Pizarro, learning of the approaching visit of Ferdinand, the governor, decides to kill Florestan in order to escape detection. He bribes Rocco to dig a secret grave in the cell, while Fidelio, aroused by this treachery, obtains leave to help the jailer. Together Fidelio and Rocco proceed to the cell (Act II.), where the unfortunate Florestan is lying overcome with starvation. When their work is over, Pizarro himself appears, and prepares to stab Florestan; but the disguised Leo-

nore, who has remained in the background, now rushes to Florestan's defence, and threatens Pizarro with a loaded pistol. At this moment the governor's trumpet-call is heard from without; Pizarro is obliged to receive him, Florestan and Leonore rush into each other's arms, and the governor restores the prisoner to his lost honours and banishes his oppressor.

This opera, like "The Magic Flute," still retains traces of the old *Singspiel*, in the form of spoken dialogue. But the verbal passages are few and short, and, if rightly uttered, may be made to add emphasis to the musical climaxes. In all French performances they have given way to recitative. Of the character of the music there is nothing but praise to be said. It is all in the strongly dramatic vein that gives such power to Beethoven's orchestral works. In an age when operatic realism was not sought after, when the characters might pause in

the midst of even the best operas and express in detail their views on the situation, the sincerity and appropriateness of the music could not fail to win its meed of admiration. But now the public makes greater demands, and the musico-dramatic action of "Fidelio," like that of "Don Giovanni," is far too deliberate for modern taste. Its many well-known numbers show Beethoven's emotional power at its greatest; but, like the Mozart selections, they are now heard to best advantage on the concert stage.

Especially suited for concert prima donnas is Fidelio's well-known outburst of indignation ("Abscheulicher!") and the glorious adagio ("Komm, Hoffnung!") with which it is joined. Jacquino's lament in the first act is also worthy of note; in this act, too, is the famous canon-quartette, "Mir ist so wunderbar;" while the jailer's sonorous "Gold Song," and Pizarro's fiery aria when

he is forced to decide on Florestan's murder, stand out in bold relief. The second act is one long dramatic *scena*, and culminates in the almost frenzied duet, "O Namenlose Freude!"

Produced at the Kaerntnerthor Theatre, in Vienna, a year before "Faniska," it was not overwhelmingly popular, and only in later times did it attain the fame of Cherubini's operas.

In judging of the classical school, as a whole, due allowance must be made for the lack of swift and natural action already alluded to. If the dramas of this epoch represented a tremendous advance over the conventional productions of a Metastasio, we can only realise their force by putting ourselves in the place of their earliest audiences, and ignoring all the progress made since their day. If we do this, we see that the formal character of the music is merely a relative matter, due to a con-

trast with the freer style of the present; and even to-day there are many who would find relief from the modern dissonances in the clear, well-formed themes of the older masters.

CHAPTER VI.

WEBER AND GERMAN ROMANTICISM.

In the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, Germany entered on the third of those great periods of literary productiveness that seem to occur at the end of every six hundred years in her history. A slave to foreign influences ever since the terrible Thirty Years' War, that devastated her great empire, she now threw off the servile yoke, and at a bound became strong in her own national life, and in her literature developed almost unexampled vigour. The works of Goethe and Schiller alone would form an epoch, but beside these classical writers there was a host of somewhat less famous but more purely national authors.

The outburst of enthusiasm found a passionate expression in the works of Novalis, the Schlegels, Tieck, Arnim, Von Kleist, and many others, who seemed determined to endow Germany with renewed emotional strength.

It may be taken as an axiom that great musicians follow great poets. Goethe and Schiller found a responsive echo in the music of Schubert, while Heine's later verses were transmuted into tones by Schumann and Franz. The spirit that found its expression in the romantic school of opera, however, did not depend on the work of any single poet or group of romantic writers, but was rather the result of the awakened feeling of the whole German people. When Weber first produced "Der Freischütz," in 1821, the entire nation was carried by storm, and the learned pundits of music looked on in amazement at the demonstration of popular feeling.



WEBER.

Carl Maria von Weber, the composer with whose name the romantic movement is always joined, was born at Eutin in 1786. He came of a family long known in connection with music, his cousin being that Constance Weber who married the lamented Mozart. But besides inheriting a genius for music, he also, unfortunately, fell heir to his father's weakness and instability of character, owing to which he led a career rather too full of variety for his own comfort and well-being. His father, who had made a second marriage late in life, had always wished to figure in the world as the parent of another Mozart. The children of his first wife, who used to troop after him while he fiddled in the fields of Cologne, grew up with no more talent than was necessary for good working musicians. So when his latest offspring brought forth a juvenile composition, the father did not hesitate to falsify his son's age in order to draw the attention of the

musical world. But he was not such a painstaking instructor as Leopold Mozart, and his son's genius flowered later in life.

The wanderings of the Weber family began a year after Carl's birth, and within a dozen years the father had appeared in different theatrical capacities in Vienna, Cassel, Meiningen, Nuremburg, Augsburg, Weimar, Erlangen, Hilburghausen, and Salzburg. So it is no exaggeration to say that Carl Maria grew up behind the scenes of the theatre. His training was of the most desultory character, though he had some good instruction from Michael Haydn, but even with imperfect cherishing his creative faculty soon asserted itself, and under Kalcher, in Munich, the twelve-year-old boy produced his first opera, "Die Macht der Liebe und des Weins." At this point his musical career might have ended, for both he and his father were much interested in Senefelder's newly discovered lithography, and thought seriously

of beginning a business career. Arrived in Freiburg, however, the boy soon forgot lithography in setting to music Steinsberg's libretto, "Das Waldmädchen." This work, which met with only moderate success, Weber himself afterward called "a very immature production, not, perhaps, without occasional marks of invention, the second act of which I wrote in ten days." Soon after this came another opera, "Peter Schmoll," also without great success.

In Vienna Weber received some really good instruction from Abt Vogler. This worthy, but perhaps somewhat eccentric chaplain, whom Mozart criticised so roundly in his letters, found a congenial pupil in the young stranger, and made him do much earnest work that bore fruit later. Through Vogler's influence, Weber became kapellmeister in Breslau, where he had his first taste of actual responsibility. After two years of strife he gave up the post to go

to Carlsruhe, whence the Napoleonic wars drove him to Stuttgart. His sojourn at Breslau was marked by the composition of the opera "Rübezahl," now unfortunately lost. In Breslau, too, the composer nearly destroyed his beautiful voice by accidentally drinking a glass of his father's nitric acid instead of wine. Unlike the Irishman in the anecdote, he did not enjoy the novel flavour, but was found unconscious, and recovered only after a long illness.

In Stuttgart, as private secretary to the unscrupulous Duke Ludwig, Weber entered into an atmosphere of corruption and intrigue that was the worst possible place for a young man of his fondness for gaiety and dissipation. His title admitted him to the circle of the dissolute nobles, and his own boon companions formed a coterie known by the striking appellation of "Faust's Descent into Hell." The effect of such feverish social life upon his work may well be im-

agined. He did rewrite his "Waldmädchen" to the new libretto of "Sylvana," but his own audacity prevented its performance. As ducal secretary he incurred some of the royal displeasure that fell on his master, and, after a stormy interview with King Frederick, the mercurial Weber directed into the royal chamber an old woman whom he found inquiring for the court washerwoman! The king said nothing, but later on, when Weber was unjustly accused of obtaining a loan under false pretences (an old servant, who negotiated the loan, having given an unauthorised promise of a court appointment to follow it), the angered monarch took advantage of the occasion to banish the composer from his dominions.

After a short but pleasant stay in Mannheim, Weber began a more earnest life in Darmstadt. Here it was that Abt Vogler said of him, in connection with another young pupil named Meyerbeer, "How sorry I should

have been if I had had to leave the world before I formed these two. There is within me a something which I have never been able to call forth, but these two will do it for me." Here, too, Weber brought out his first real success, the one-act comedy, "Abu Hassan." But even after this he did not settle down wholly, and his journeys afterward took him to Prague, Dresden, and Berlin. His brightness, his peculiarities, his lively melodies and artistic wanderings were in full accord with the romantic spirit of German national life, and made him seem more like a troubadour of old than a man of the practical nineteenth century.

In Prague, in 1813, the errant minstrel at last settled down to a quiet life, and became leader of the theatre. This post he held for three years, during which he made an earnest effort to revive the departed operatic glories of the Bohemian capital. In 1816 came the last change, and he obtained the position of

kapellmeister in Dresden. It was in the latter city that he composed the operas that made his name famous in the annals of music, — "Der Freischütz" for Berlin, given in 1821, as a protest against the Italian influence of Spontini, "Preciosa," performed earlier in the same season at Berlin, "Euryanthe" for Vienna in 1823, and "Oberon" at London in 1826. The British capital was the scene of his death in the same year, after a long struggle against consumption.

The plot of "Der Freischütz" is based upon the old forest tradition of a demon who offers huntsmen magic bullets in exchange for their souls. Kaspar, a ranger in the service of Prince Ottokar of Bohemia, is in the power of the evil spirit Zamiel, and will soon forfeit his soul unless he can bring a fresh victim in his place. The chief hunter, Kuno, is about to retire, and Max, who loves Kuno's daughter, Agatha, hopes to gain her hand by winning the post. Kas-

par, with Zamiel's aid, causes Max to shoot poorly in the preliminary contest, after which the dejected lover falls a prey to Kaspar's temptations, and agrees to meet him at midnight in the Wolf's Glen, where magic bullets can be obtained from Zamiel. Meanwhile Agatha, full of forebodings of evil, is visited by a holy hermit, who gives her a magic wreath of roses to ward off danger. Max tries to comfort her uneasiness, without success, and at last leaves for the midnight tryst, despite his own inward fear. In the glen, Zamiel is summoned, and amid weird incantations seven magic bullets are cast, six to obey Max, the last to do Zamiel's bidding. Next morning, Agatha, still a prey to bad dreams and ill omens, refuses the comfort of her maid Anne, and when a funeral wreath is sent her by mistake in place of the bridal garland, she dons the hermit's gift instead. In the ensuing contest, Max easily defeats all competitors with his six magic bullets,

but when the prince asks for another shot, Zamiel causes Max to aim at Agatha. The holy wreath, however, protects her, and the ubiquitous bullet at last kills Kaspar. Zamiel obtains his original victim, and Max, after confession and pardon, is free to claim Agatha as bride.

The music to this national legend, combining as it did all of Weber's brilliancy with the beautiful simplicity of the German *Volkslied*, won a success that was not only tremendous at the start, but as lasting as any in the realm of opera. The German nation went wild with delight over their new drama. Weber himself, after conducting a performance of it in Vienna, wrote in his diary: "Greater enthusiasm there cannot be, and I tremble to think of the future, for it is scarcely possible to rise higher than this. To God alone the praise!" The noble horn quartette of the overture, the tender prayer of Agatha, the brisk hunting choruses, the

sombre grandeur of the incantations, the homely comfortings of Anne and the bridesmaids, and the sensational climax, must have dealt an overwhelming blow to the conventionalities that still remained in the old-style operas.

"Preciosa," composed later but performed earlier, was also a work of genius, though its Spanish subject prevented its attaining national import. "Die Drei Pintos," a comic opera, was left incomplete and not brought out until after Weber's death.

The next great work, "Euryanthe," was handicapped by the poorly arranged libretto of Helmine von Chezy, a conceited bluestocking. The play opens with a royal festival in mediæval France, where Count Adolar praises the virtue of his betrothed Euryanthe, and a less favoured suitor, Lysiart, wagers that he can gain her love. With the aid of her maid Eglantine, who is jealous of her, Lysiart obtains a ring and learns a

secret about Adolar's sister Emma, both of which apparently compromise Euryanthe. The unlucky heroine is dragged off to a wilderness by Adolar, there to be killed; but she still shows her devotion by trying to sacrifice herself in his place when he is attacked by a serpent, so he spares her life. The king then finds her, and soon becomes convinced of her innocence. Meanwhile the wedding procession of Lysiart and Eglantine is interrupted by Adolar's appearance, and Eglantine confesses that she ruined Euryanthe in the hope of winning Adolar. Lysiart stabs her, and is led off to the scaffold, while Adolar and Euryanthe are reunited by the king.

Despite a disjointed plot, this work possessed much of the musical merit of its predecessor, and continued the new school of romantic opera. The partial nature of its success was very depressing to Weber, though he must have found comfort in the

enthusiasm it aroused at Vienna. This warm reception caused Beethoven to write to him, "I am glad! For this is the way the Germans must get the upper hand of the Italian sing-song."

"Oberon," the prototype of many scenes of fairy music, is founded on the old French romance of "Huon of Bordeaux." The fairy king has quarrelled with Queen Titania, and will not be reconciled until he can find two lovers constant to each other through all trials and temptations. Puck brings news of Sir Huon, who has killed Charlemagne's son and is condemned to journey to Bagdad, kill the man at the caliph's right hand, and bring back Reiza, the caliph's daughter. Oberon resolves to rest his vow on Sir Huon's constancy, and shows him a vision of Reiza, with whom the knight falls in love. With the aid of a magic horn given him by Oberon, Huon performs his allotted task at Bagdad, but on returning the lovers meet with many trials,

in the shape of shipwreck, slavery, and persecution from their owners. They remain faithful, however, and are rescued from death by the magic horn, while Oberon regains his queen, and Sir Huon wins a full pardon from Charlemagne.

The music to "Oberon," especially in the fairy scenes, is of a delightful freshness and charm, despite the fact that the composer was slowly dying when he wrote it. The fairies of Gade, Bennett, Schumann, and even Mendelssohn are certainly indebted to Weber for at least a large part of their attractiveness, while in the realm of opera the work of Weber's successors is often a matter of direct imitation.

Although the operas of the romantic school are much given to fairies, ghosts, demons, and other supernatural characters, they may with perfect propriety treat of far different topics. Their librettos may deal with such widely varying subjects as the

splendours of chivalry, the loneliness of the Black Forest, the solitude of a cloister, or the innocent pleasures of rustic merry-makers. The character of the school lies not only in the subject, but in the treatment as well. The plot must, of course, not be prosaic, and generally it takes a definite flight into the regions of poetic fancy; but, whatever the scene, the composer must always treat it in a natural and unaffected manner, being gay or sad, earnest or playful, according to the demands of the situation.

The claim that Ludwig Spohr (1784–1859) was the real founder of the romantic school has often been advanced, but never satisfactorily proved. His "Faust" (not founded on Goethe's drama) was performed in 1818, and had been completed five years earlier, but the existing portions of Weber's "Rübezahl" show beyond doubt that it can be claimed as the earliest example of the school. There are many critics, too, who are

hardly willing to call Spohr a romantic composer at all. Of his many works, "Faust," "Jessonda," and "Zemire and Azor" were most successful in withstanding the ravages of time. But his music is too full of chromatic modulations for the best effect, and he lacked the variety of expression that made Weber equally at ease in gaiety or sadness, in the gloom of the woods or the brilliant pageantry of kingly festivals.

One of the best of Weber's imitators was Heinrich Marschner (1796–1861), whose long life brought him in touch with many different periods in the history of music. He knew Beethoven, and witnessed the rise of the symphony, he admired Weber, and helped him in his efforts to create the German national opera, and he exerted an influence of no little power on the earlier compositions of Wagner. Of his own works, three stand out in bolder relief than the rest. "Der Vampyr," his first great production, deals

with the pleasing tale of a nobleman who had forfeited his life to the devil by perjury, and could prolong it only by drinking the blood of three brides during each year. "Templer und Jüdin," the only one of his works which might have become popular outside of Germany, is a rather incoherent setting of the adventures of Ivanhoe and Rebecca, whose trials may have suggested to Wagner the great scene of Elsa's dream and Lohengrin's arrival. "Hans Heiling," undoubtedly Marschner's best work, treats of the ill success of the king of the Gnomes in an effort to turn mortal and win the love of a human maiden. His tribulations are doubtless responsible for much of the libretto in "The Flying Dutchman." Marschner excelled in his supernatural pictures, in his rough humour, and in the ease and freedom of his folk-scenes. Like Weber, he was thoroughly at home in echoing the spirit of the common people. Wagner was not his only great

admirer, for Schumann gave him high praise for his dramatic talent and expressive melody.

Hoffmann (1776–1822) wrote eleven operas, but the only one of any importance was a setting of Fouqué's beautiful "Undine." Another disciple of romanticism was Lindpaintner (1791–1856), who lacked something in depth and originality, but won great admiration for his clearness, brilliancy, and thorough musical skill.

The works of Kreutzer (1782–1849) and Lortzing (1803–52) are of a less ambitious character, but are full of a vivacious sweetness that has gone far to make them the national form of German light opera. Like the *opéra comique* of France, they do not treat comic subjects only, but often deal with serious themes. Kreutzer's "Nachtlager von Granada" shows much of the true romantic spirit, and contains some admirable concerted music. Lortzing's best known

work is his "Czar und Zimmermann," a tuneful portrayal of the adventures of Peter the Great in the Saardam shipyard, while "Der Wildschütz" is a lively comedy of intrigue and disguise. With these two men should be classed Otto Nicolai (1810–49), whose "Merry Wives of Windsor" is full of the most captivating music.

Among the great classical composers of the time, three made advances into the operatic field. Mendelssohn's early work, "Camacho's Wedding," is of little value, but the finale to his fragmentary "Lorelei" shows some power. Schubert's operas and operettas only served to prove that his style was too lengthy for the stage. Schumann's "Genoveva" is of more ambitious cast, but suffers from a slight monotony, despite its many musical beauties.

The composers of the romantic school used all the orchestral resources that the great symphonists had developed, and used

them freely for dramatic purposes. The various tone-colours of the different instruments were brought out in their full force for the first time. While the artist has but one means of producing his tints, the musician has two methods for gaining effects of emotional colour, — harmony and instrumentation. Classical music was marked by the development of both of these adjuncts to melody, and in the operatic field the same change is visible. But an excessively harmonic style may often interfere with dramatic action, and the later masters of the concert stage were unable to grasp the true spirit of opera, until the advent of Richard Wagner, whose works combined all the resources of melody, harmony, and tone-colour, and set the standard for the entire world.

CHAPTER VII.

ROSSINI AND ITALIAN OPERA.

WHILE Germany had been developing her greatness in music, and giving to the world such men as Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and other lesser lights, Italy had been proceeding in the opposite direction. In the earlier days of Allegri, Palestrina, and the school of vocal part-writers, Italy possessed music that was equal to any. But instead of advancing, as Germany did, the Southern country went steadily backward, despite the efforts of Scarlatti and his pupils; its composers forgot the glories of the sacred school, and produced nothing worthy to take its place. For the varied concert programmes of the present, Italy furnishes almost no material.



OPERA HOUSE OF LA SCALA, MILAN.

The only important work done was in the field of opera. But since opera, by its very nature, must please the popular taste in order to succeed, it follows that if the public enjoy trivial works, those will be the ones that flourish. Italy, unlike Germany, is a land of singing rather than of music,[1] and as soon as emphasis is placed on things vocal rather than things dramatic, on manner rather than matter, deterioration is certain to result. The consequence is that the works of Rossini and his compeers, despite their fluent brilliancy and perfection of technique, are composed of flimsy material, and rely for their support on a public that is often frankly unmusical.

According to the definition of Fétis, music

[1] W. F. Apthorp, in his "Opera Past and Present," quotes Peri's preface to "Euridice," and shows that even in this pioneer Italian opera the prima donna, Archilei, was allowed to add to the *éclat* of the occasion by introducing various vocal embellishments; *lunghi giri e gruppi*, Peri calls them.

is simply the art of moving the emotions by combinations of sounds. This seems to cover nearly all schools and tastes, but a passing mention of the psychological principles bearing upon the case may serve to show the difference between the so-called classical and popular styles.

The perception of rhythm, of regularity of vibrations, and also of any marked differences in their rate of speed, or pitch, is common to nearly all mankind and a large number of animals. But the music of the present rests rather on the relation of different pitches to one another when combined in chords. Thus the notes in a major triad vibrate in the proportion of 4, 5, and 6, the upper notes vibrating faster than the lower ones; in the inversions of the triad, 5, 6, 8, and 6, 8, 10 (or 3, 4, 5). The fact that these are the simplest mathematical chord-relations will show why music consisting of a few major chords is understood by every one, and suits the popular

taste. The more intricate the chords become, the more expert in detecting the relative vibration-rates must be the ears of those who are to extract any pleasure from the music.

Besides this perception of the tone-relations in single chords, there is also the equally important subject of the progression of chords. If a chord is succeeded by another that resembles it very closely in character, having some of the notes of the original chord held and only a few changed, the difference is easily grasped by the ordinary brain, and the average auditor is interested because he can understand what he hears. If the chord-progression takes its hearers to a chord but little related to its predecessor, the mind has less common material with which to associate the two chords, and while the musician may see the relation at once, the less gifted or less trained hearer will not perceive it, and in consequence the musical order of chord-

events becomes chaos for him.[1] The best music, to fulfil all conditions, should consist

[1] If the reader will pause for a moment to think of all his acquaintances who are at all musical, he will readily recognise the different types. Those who are fond of music, but have no ear for pitch, doubtless enjoy the rhythm or the regularity of vibrations. The many who like dance-tunes evidently appreciate the former quality most. Those who like opera, but care little for classical music, are evidently lacking in the power to recognise chords, and would probably see little difference in two settings of the same song, provided the melody were kept alike in both. It is at present impossible to say why some harmonies produce one set of emotions and others a different set; but if the reason is incomprehensible, the fact is still evident. The musical auditor who is endowed with a keen sense of chord-progressions will unconsciously harmonise for himself any melody to which he listens, just as the copyist would fill out a thorough-bass and change the numerals into actual notes. If the melody is of such a nature that it implies unattractive chord-progressions, it repels the trained hearer. This is the reason why the tunes of a Mozart appeal to a totally higher public than the popular vulgarities known as "rag-time." The former suggest to the musician the most delightful of harmonies, while the latter are generally based on the most tawdry arrangements of chords. The greatest revelations of harmonic beauty are found in the works of Wagner.

of simple fundamental ideas, with a more or less intricate setting. The music of Rossini and the Italians of his time errs in presenting successive chord-relations that are too simple, and at times affect those who possess a refined sense of harmony about as a problem in the multiplication table would appeal to a student in quarternions. The result is that Rossini's compositions are rarely thought worthy of arrangement for the symphonic stage, but serve merely to illustrate the brilliant singing of some favourite prima donna.

The music of this school is also lacking in that other essential operatic quality — dramatic fitness. But this is not so much the fault of the composers as of the librettists, who wrote in an undramatic manner, and of the public, who tolerated any nonsense provided they could have their arias and vocal scenes. The absurdities of much of the so-called Italian opera are too well known to need a lengthy description. The chorus never

has any desires of its own, but stands around stolidly while uttering phrases of perfunctory sympathy to the heroine. When she is not on the stage, her absence drives it to the praise of drink. Meanwhile the other characters disregard one another at the faintest pretext, and come down to the footlights to sing their confidences to the public. The tragic events that occur all about them lead them to stifle their woes in a series of brilliant solos, while the heroine either kills some one, or is killed herself, or else goes mad and treats the audience to a display of astonishing vocal fireworks. Finally all the principals meet with some terrible fate, doubtless in punishment for their sins against dramatic truth.

These strictures, while generally fitting the case in the *Opera Seria*, are utterly irrelevant when applied to its pendant, the *Opera Buffa*. The reason is not hard to find. If the gay, pleasure-loving character of the Italian pub-

lic prevented them from rising to a true appreciation of the grandeur of tragedy, it enabled them all the more fully to enter into the rollicking mirth of comedy. Thus, while in one case the drama became of less import than the singing, in the other the subject matter was of paramount importance, and the music, hampered by no conventions, reflected the situation, and followed it naturally. The Italian tragic operas of the Rossini period are now put aside by musicians, while the comic ones are welcomed, merely because the latter are based on true artistic principles, while the former are not. Yet even here, if the music be separated from its stage-setting, and performed by pianist or orchestra, it will show an attractive, airy lightness and delicacy, but none of the depth of feeling evinced in the compositions of the Teutonic or Slavic races. Credit where credit is due, however; the charming vivacity of the Italian light operas makes them

outrank all similar productions in other nations.

That the musical status of Italy is responsible for the character of its operas, may well be seen from a description of the theatrical methods of Rossini's time. In the smaller Italian towns, affairs of state and the progress of nations were of less account than the local opera. This was in charge of an impresario, generally a rich man, always a self-important one. He would form a company, consisting of a *prima donna*, *tenore*, *basso cantante*, *basso buffo*, *secunda donna*, and a third *basso*. A libretto was then purchased from some hungry disciple of the muses, for about fifteen dollars, and a *maestro* (composer) engaged to set it for perhaps two hundred.

Rossini, after youthful successes at Venice, Milan, and Bologna, was in great demand everywhere in Italy, and wrote many of his brightest operas for such companies. The first few weeks of his stay in the different cities

would be filled with dinners and fêtes. After this period of pleasure, he would suddenly fall to work, with all the wonderful speed and facility for which he was famous. On hearing the voices of his singers, he would suit his music to their peculiarities, and aim to bring out their best points. The composition would progress rapidly, in spite of the constant interruption of friends and occasional late dinners, until finally all was ready for the trying ordeal of rehearsal. "It was here," to quote an eye-witness,[1] "that the amateur of the North would stand astonished to hear persons, perfectly ignorant of music, incapable of playing a common waltz on the piano, or even of describing the difference between one tone and another, sing and accompany by instinct, and with admirable spirit, music the most singular and original, and composed by the master almost under

[1] De Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle), "Memoirs of Rossini," p. 70.

their very eyes." Then came the performance, with an intensely interested audience, ready to applaud a piece to the echo, or hiss it into oblivion on the impulse of the moment. It is not strange that under these circumstances the Italian masters wrote music that was pleasing only superficially, and not essentially learned. The wonder is that they could write at all.

In following the order of history, we find that the suave and tasteful style of Cimarosa was carried on by many other Italian composers, of whom Ferdinando Paer (1771–1839) and Johann Simon Mayer (1763–1818) were the most important. Paer was the first to set the libretto which Beethoven used in "Fidelio," while Mayer tried to introduce into Italy some of the instrumental progress of his native Germany. Mayer is said to have invented the famous orchestral crescendo that Rossini used so effectively, though De Stendhal asserts that the great Italian

stole it from a Milanese composer named Mosca.

Gioacchino Antonio Rossini (1792–1868) was son of the town trumpeter and the baker's daughter of Pesaro. He showed great aptitude for music, and studied singing, 'cello, and counterpoint, though he hated the last and dropped it as soon as he knew enough to compose operas. His early Italian productions show the prevailing melodic tendencies, coupled with an unusual fertility of invention.[1] Soon after he began his

[1] Rossini's great facility in the details of composing is shown by the joke he played on the manager of the Teatro San Mosé, in Venice. When that worthy gratified an old grudge by forcing him to set to music the wretched libretto of "I Due Bruschini," the composer turned the tables by introducing all kinds of tricks. The second violins mark each bar in the overture by a bow-stroke on the lampshades of the performers; the bass sings high notes, while the soprano is forced as low as she can go; a funeral march interrupts one of the most comical scenes; and the words are at times united to the music in such a way that nothing is audible but a jumble of

career, in 1810, all Italy was at his feet. The qualities of his work shortly became manifest — he showed a tremendous amount of dash and vigour, and aimed at success by making a vivid impression on his auditors. Even in *Opera Seria* he introduced much of the brilliancy and *verve* of the *Buffa* style, and it is this quality of incessant liveliness that made his works hold the stage for such a long time. The operas of his youth, such as "Tancredi" (1813), illustrate this tendency and no other. Afterward, in such works as "La Gazza Ladra" (Milan, 1817) and the famous "Barber of Seville" (Rome, 1816), he began to introduce into his own music some of the orchestral strength and variety of the German masters, and even to steal their ideas. Rossini was never too scrupulous in adapting the work of others,

meaningless syllables. The opera disappeared after one night, and was soon forgotten in the success of "Tancredi."

though he generally managed to invest it with an original flavour.[1]

His first exodus from his native land took place in 1822, when he brought out German versions of his "Cenerentola" and "Zelmira" in Vienna. After the partial failure of the blood-curdling "Semiramide" in Venice during the next year, he migrated to London, tempted by an offer from the

[1] Besides stealing the thunder of other masters, Rossini often exercised the composer's right of drawing from his own works. M. Castil-Blaze ("De l'Opéra Italien," p. 459) recounts a conversation with Rossini, after the performance of the latter's Mass, in which the maestro suddenly began to name the originals of its various numbers. "'Credo in unum Deum?'" "'Ecco ridente il cielo.'" "But you treated it as a chorus?" "To be sure; was not that its original form in 'Aureliano in Palmira?'" "The 'Kyrie?'" "'Santo imen,' religious chorus from 'Otello.'" "'Christe eleison?'" "Canon quintet from 'Mosé.'" "'Incarnatus?'" "'Prayer of Ninetta.'" "'Crucifixus?'" "Chorus of shades in 'Mosé.'" "Leaving the sad for the joyous, how about 'Cum Sancto Spiritu' and 'Et vitam venturi sæculi,' where composers generally use their brightest ideas?" "I used the strettos of the quintet in 'Cenerentola' and the finale of 'Semiramide.'"

King's Theatre. A season in the British capital netted him handsome profits, partly from his playing the piano at fashionable *soirées*, but the directorship of the Théâtre Italien, in Paris, tempted him to make another change, in 1824. Here he reproduced many of his early works, with such success that he was retained as royal composer. He reached the climax of his career in 1829, with the production of "Guillaume Tell," a work in which he seemed able to cast aside almost wholly the trivial vulgarities that marred his earlier style, and to write with a breadth and freedom that deserve the sincerest praise. But just as he had attained this high level, he ceased all work. The king, Charles X., was forced to abdicate in 1830, and Rossini's enemies came into power with the new régime; so the composer left Paris without trying to write the four operas that were to have followed "Tell," and afterward became a passive spectator of the triumphs of Meyerbeer.

Of the old-style serious operas, Rossini's "Semiramide" has held the stage longest. The story, founded on Voltaire's "Semiramis," is in brief as follows: Ninus, King of Babylon, has been murdered by his queen, Semiramis, and her lover, Prince Assur. Arsaces, supposed to be a Scythian but in reality a son of the queen, returns from a successful war to receive public honours, and wins the secret love of Semiramis, though he himself is devoted to Azema, a related princess. During the sacred festival of allegiance to the queen, the tomb of Ninus suddenly opens, and his ghost utters the prophecy that Arsaces will be king. At a midnight meeting by the tomb, Assur attempts to stab Arsaces, but kills Semiramis by mistake, while Arsaces then takes vengeance upon the murderer, and is free to ascend the throne with Azema.

It is not hard to see why this relic of Babylonian criminology failed to satisfy the

pleasure-loving Venetians. The plot is long and tedious; the music is full of instrumental power, but lacking in ideas, though the vocal parts contain all the usual embellishments so pleasing to Italian audiences.

The delightful "Barber of Seville," founded on the comedy of Beaumarchais, opens before the house of Doctor Bartolo, whose pretty ward, Rosina, has won the admiration of the ardent Count Almaviva. After a serenade and an exchange of letters, the count disguises as a drunken dragoon, and gains admission into the house by the aid of the factotum Figaro. This stratagem is foiled by the entrance of the guard, who attempt to arrest the would-be suitor. He next appears as a self-constituted substitute for the music-teacher, Don Basilio, whom he asserts to be sick. To please Bartolo, who wishes Rosina for himself, the count produces his own letter from Rosina, and makes the doctor think he will inflame Rosina's jealousy by

showing this note apparently in the hands of a stranger. He secures an interview and arranges an elopement, but is interrupted by the approach of Don Basilio. Bartolo, who has seen Rosina's note, arouses her jealousy in earnest with it, whereupon she confesses the count's plans; Almaviva, however, arrives first at the meeting-place with a notary, and has time to explain the situation and marry Rosina before Bartolo and his friends appear.

This work, like the others of the lighter school, is made up of attractive material properly presented, and displays none of the absurdities of the more ambitious type. Among its many well-known numbers are the count's serenade, Figaro's celebrated description of his duties ("Largo al Factotum"), Don Basilio's plotting aria ("La Calunnia"), Rosina's chamber aria ("Una Voce Poco Fa"), the ingenious dragoon finale of the first act, the music lesson (in

which Rosina is permitted to interpolate her own selections), and the delicate final trio of the count, Figaro, and Rosina ("Zitti, Zitti"). These numerous beauties in a work that was written in fifteen days bear striking testimony to their composer's marvellous facility. But this exhilarating opera is not merely a set of detached scenes; it forms a complete artistic whole, as truly as any German music-drama.

In "William Tell," Leutold, after killing an intrusive underling of the Austrian tyrant Gessler, is rescued by Tell, who thus incurs the ruler's wrath. Melchthal is put to death by the despot, and Arnold, Melchthal's son, despite his love for Gessler's daughter, Mathilde, joins Tell and the other Swiss conspirators in an oath of vengeance. To discover the plotters, Gessler demands homage for his hat, which he places on a pole in the public square. As in the story, Tell refuses to bow, is forced to shoot the apple from his son's

head, and is imprisoned for having a second arrow ready for Gessler, if the first had killed the boy. Arnold rescues the prisoner, and, after Tell has slain Gessler, Arnold and Mathilde are united.

This is unquestionably Rossini's worthiest work. It is written in a broad, serious style, and is full of great orchestral touches, stirring harmonies, and inspiring climaxes. The brilliant overture, with its thunderstorm, its "Ranz de Vaches," and its resounding trumpet calls, wins universal success on the concert stage. The bright Alpine choruses, the dramatic scene of Leutold's rescue and Melchthal's arrest, the lively music of the hunters and shepherds, Mathilde's tender romanza, the powerful oath trio ("La Gloria Inflammi"), the gathering of the cantons, the effective archery scene, and the final hymn of freedom, are passages that lead the auditor to wonder if their composer can be the same man who wrote the trivial vocalises

of "Bel Raggio" in "Semiramide." The great critic Hanslick claims with some show of justice that the first two acts of "William Tell" are among the best achievements of modern opera.

The works of Donizetti (1798–1848) and Bellini (1802–1835) show less of orchestral vigour than those of Rossini, but rely more on the popularity of their vocal numbers. Donizetti's tragic operas, which were so well received in their time, are now seen to be utterly conventional in form, and without any depth of musical thought, and they survive chiefly to augment the fame of some popular *coloratur* soprano. His "Lucia di Lammermoor," an Italianised version of Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor," is, perhaps, the most flagrant example of its school, and its fierce and tragic libretto is accompanied by some of the most sugary melodies that ever appeared in the pages of the Italian singing-dramas.

As in the novel, Sir Henry Ashton wishes his sister Lucy to marry Lord Arthur Bucklaw, for financial and political reasons. To break off her engagement with Sir Edgar Ravenswood, Henry intercepts Edgar's letters and forges a paper to prove him unfaithful; whereupon Lucy consents to marry Arthur. As she signs the contract, Edgar appears, and explains the truth. Lucy, insane with grief, kills Arthur, and on her own recovery dies of horror at her deed. Edgar, awaiting Henry to fight a duel, hears of her death and kills himself.

Of Donizetti's other serious works, only "La Favorita" and "Lucrezia Borgia" deserve mention. "La Favorita" deals with the fortunes (or misfortunes) of the young Fernando, in the service of the King of Rome. He wins military glory, and is rewarded for it by the hand of the king's cast-off mistress, whom he repudiates on learning of her past life, but forgives just before her

death. "Lucrezia Borgia" treats of the unlucky admiration of Gennaro for Lucrezia, who is really his mother, and of her vain efforts to save him from being poisoned by the jealous duke, her husband.

In lighter vein, Donizetti showed all the usual excellence of his race. It cannot be too often repeated, however, that this national success is not due to any special efforts on the part of the composers, but to the fact that, while they wrote tragedies for the singers, their comedies were intended for the actors. The *buffo* works, therefore, always display the proper operatic structure, and contain action enhanced by music, while the vocal concerts that masquerade as serious operas show the anomaly of singing supported by an incidental libretto.

"La Fille du Regiment" has for its hero the Tyrolese peasant Tonio, who enters a regiment to win the love of Marie, its vivandière. Marie, who had been adopted as a

foundling by the regiment, turns out to be the daughter of a marquise, who carries her off; but Tonio, after becoming colonel, finally succeeds in his suit.

"Don Pasquale" turns upon a trick played on an old miser of that name, who has decided to marry again, since his nephew, Ernest, will not wed according to his dictates. With the connivance of a friend, Doctor Malatesta, Ernest persuades his own sweetheart, Norina, to receive the Don's attentions. After accepting them, she gives her elderly suitor such an exhibition of assumed shrewishness and extravagance that he is only too glad to give up his idea of marrying and resign her to Ernest.

"L'Elisir d'Amore" has a much weaker plot, and deals with the use of a love-potion bought from a conjuror by the villager Nemorino. He succeeds in winning his adored Adina, despite the fascinations of a regimental sergeant.

The music to these three plays is full of vivacity and charm, and shows the genius of the composer at its best. This inimitable brightness of Donizetti, and the evident power of Rossini as shown in his last work, amply prove that both men were greater than their school, and that the true count in the musical indictment against them lies in their yielding to the mandates of a depraved public taste.

Bellini did no work in light opera. "Norma," his greatest tragedy, is a tale of the Druids in Gaul during the Roman occupation. Norma, the high-priestess, is secretly married to the Roman proconsul Pollio. He proves faithless, and falls in love with a young virgin of the temple. This maiden, Adalgisa, is persuaded to fly with him, but conscience impels her to confess to Norma, thus exposing Pollio's treachery to both. Norma is magnanimous enough to plan to send Adalgisa to Pollio, but she re-

fuses this generous offer, and tries to convince the priestess of his ultimate repentance. Pollio, however, embroils the Druids by trying to tear Adalgisa from the altar, and in the struggle he is captured. Norma offers to save him if he will renounce Adalgisa, but he refuses. The priestess, in pity for him, then tries to declare herself the guilty one. At this he wakens to her worth, and the pair mount the funeral pyre to die together.

"Norma" is emphatically one of the "singing-operas," but it depends on broad, sustained *cantilena* rather than on vocal embellishments. The singers of the time managed to infuse into these melodies an amount of expression often sufficient to cover the weaknesses of the dramatic structure. The absurdity of a mellifluous trio between Pollio and his two victims must be evident at first glance, but the dignified sweetness of Norma's great prayer ("Casta Diva") is one of many instances where Bellini

was able to infuse real feeling into his characters.

"La Sonnambula," based on Scribe's story, has for its heroine the sleep-walker Amina. When Rodolfo, the young lord of the village, returns from abroad, Amina, in her sleep, enters his room at the inn. The jealous Lisa denounces her to her lover, Elvino, and for a time wins his regard. Rodolfo proclaims Amina's innocence, but is not believed until she is seen walking in her sleep across a frail bridge over the mill-wheel.

This simple tale has sufficed as a subject for melodies of the most direct and touching emotion, and if the musician of to-day is forced to rate them as flimsy in comparison with more modern songs, he can still give full praise to their appealing sincerity. Amina's final ecstatic outburst of joy ("Ah, non giunge") is a perennial favourite with singers and audiences.

"I Puritani" deals with Lord Arthur Talbot's love for Elvira, daughter of Lord Walton, in whose castle the Queen Henrietta Maria is confined by order of Cromwell. Lord Arthur, who is a Cavalier, effects the queen's escape, and Elvira, believing him faithless, goes insane. Later on Arthur is arrested, but receives pardon in the nick of time, while Elvira recovers her reason, and the pair are reunited.

As in the two preceding operas, the composer displayed much skill in the use of expressive melodic material. To quote a modern authority,[1] "In an age of fustian and balderdash, Bellini stood apart, a tender and pathetic figure, with no pretensions to science, but gifted with a stream of melody as copious, unaffected, and sincere as has ever fallen to the lot of a composer for the stage."

The other well-known exponents of the school were Mercadante (1797–1870), who

[1] R. A. Streatfeild, "The Opera," p. 129.

showed much facility in his "Guiramento;" Pacini (1796–1867), whose "Saffo" was a direct imitation of Rossini; Vaccai (1790–1848), whose "Giulietta e Romeo" has much merit of its own; and Verdi, who will be described later. *Opera Buffa* virtually came to an end with Donizetti. Some good work has been done in Italy since his day by Luigi and Federico Ricci, Carlo Pedrotti, and Antonio Cagnoni, but this has had little effect outside of Italy. The inanities that are seen on the comic stage to-day, not only in America but in many European countries as well, are immeasurably below the comedies of Cimarosa, Paisiello, Rossini, or Donizetti. The average light opera of the present stands in relation to these about as a cheap theatrical vaudeville would seem when placed in comparison with the works of Sheridan or Shakespeare.

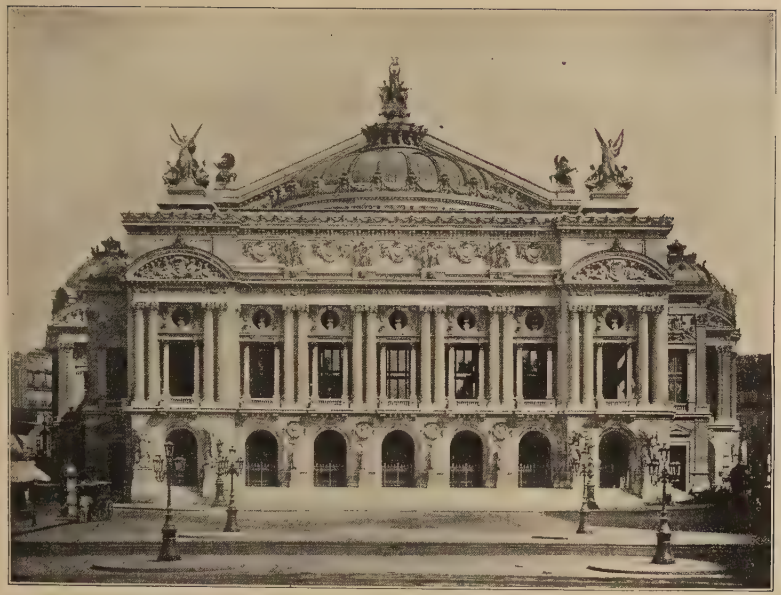
The Rossini school of tragedy is now seen to be based on incorrect ideas. As far as

artistic purpose is concerned, it was a distinct retrogression from the principles of Gluck and his followers. "The play's the thing," and the music should always intensify it. Different epochs may have widely different music, but the recitatives of Peri, the dramatic arias of Gluck, and the melos of Wagner, all endeavour to heighten the effect of the words. With Rossini and his compeers, the singing is the paramount idea. The music may fit the words, or it may not; if it does, well and good, if not, so much the worse for the words. The musical student, then, while giving full admiration to the genius of these men, must admit that their methods are not in accordance with the true standards of operatic composition. The fact that Rossini for a time dominated the entire musical world bears witness to his great natural genius, but does not alter the artistic principles that lie at the root of all vocal music.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRENCH GRAND OPERA.

THE reaction from Italianism in the French capital was not entirely due to any single man. Paris, which had witnessed the triumph of Gluck's genius half a century earlier, was not again to behold the spectacle of one master spirit leading the public to a true perception of operatic glories. Instead of a dramatic composer to open a new path similar to that blazed out by Weber in German opera, or by Victor Hugo in French literature, we find that it is the public themselves who are ready to appreciate grand opera, and the musicians who merely aim to gratify their desires. It could hardly be otherwise, in the city where Gluck fought



PARIS OPERA HOUSE.

and Cherubini triumphed. Even the easy-going Rossini felt the influence, and produced "William Tell."

The result of many efforts to adapt the best of the different schools of music for French use was a sort of composite affair, — an attempt to unite the superficial fluency of Italy with the deeper dramatic fervour of Germany. The first to feel the force of the new romantic movement was Herold (1791 – 1833). He was a man of marked genius, and not in any degree a servile imitator. If his works are not all of equal merit, and show a disposition to waver between Italian and German tendencies, it must be remembered that many of them failed because of weak librettos, and that his music nearly always excelled in worth the words to which it was set. He possessed a marked richness of inspiration, and imparted to the French ballet that vivid warmth of expression that has been its chief characteristic ever since his day.

The greatest success of Herold's career, and the one that gained him international renown, was the opera "Zampa," in which the reflection of Italian grace and German sincerity is allied to the peculiar charm of elegance that seems such an essentially national trait in France. Its somewhat artificial plot deals with the adventures of the famous (or infamous) pirate Zampa, whose exploits have made him notorious throughout Italy. While visiting Sicily to obtain the ransom of the rich merchant Lugano, who has become his prisoner, Zampa is captivated by the charms of the Sicilian's beautiful daughter Camilla, and at once claims her hand as the price of her father's release. Camilla loves the young officer Alfonso, but consents to Zampa's demands in order to save her father. At the marriage feast, Zampa recognises the statue of Alice Manfredi, a young girl whom he had betrayed and abandoned, and who had found a home

with Lugano, in whose house she died. In jest, the pirate places a ring on the statue's finger, which immediately closes upon it. The opera is brought to a summary end by the statue, which claims Zampa as its own, snatches him from the arms of Camilla, and descends with him to the infernal regions.

"Le Pré aux Clercs," which followed "Zampa," is more purely national in character, and less effective musically. The scene is laid in Navarre, and the plot is full of intrigues and conspiracies. It treats of the fortunes of Mergy, a young Bernese nobleman who wishes to marry Isabelle, maid of honour to the queen, and of the final union of the couple, despite the king's opposition.

Auber (1784–1871) was the legitimate successor of Boieldieu in *Opéra Comique*. His long career of activity extended to 1869, but his most noted productions were those of a much earlier date. Almost all of them show the frigid elegance of style displayed by

his great predecessor, with something of the careless fluency of Rossini in addition. But in "La Muette de Portici," the composer rose to an infinitely higher plane than he ever attained before or since. This opera, better known as "Masaniello," appeared in 1828, a year before Rossini's masterpiece, and may thus be rated as the first example of the grand style of French opera that was to reach its greatest development in the hands of Meyerbeer.

The scene of the opera is laid near Naples. Fenella, the dumb heroine, has been betrayed by Duke Alphonso. Her brother, the fisherman Masaniello, incites his fellows to revolt against the oppression of the nobles, and after a successful uprising his victorious followers choose him as king. Masaniello spares Alphonso and the latter's betrothed (Elvira), at the instance of the forgiving Fenella, from whom they have sought aid in their flight. Meanwhile the defeated party have gathered

a second army, and advance to attack the people. Masaniello, after a fit of madness, is killed by his own comrades. Fenella then unites Alphonso and Elvira, and takes her own life by plunging into a lava-stream on Mount Vesuvius.

The music to this popular precursor of Wagner's "Rienzi" is fraught with earnestness and power, and abounds in bold effects and original harmonies. Despite moments of formality and a conventional mad scene, "Masaniello" is a strong work, full of life and movement that admit of the most stirring treatment. Even Wagner, German as he was, freely acknowledged its worth, and spoke highly of its original instrumentation, the excellent arrangement of its dramatic choral effects, and its happy strokes of characterisation.

Among the best of Auber's light operas are "Le Maçon" (1825) and "Les Diamants de la Couronne" (1841). More often per-

formed than either of these, however, is "Fra Diavolo" (1830), a sprightly setting of a comic libretto by Scribe. Fra Diavolo, a bandit (said to have had an actual existence), dresses as a marquis, and follows Lord and Lady Allcash to an inn, intent upon robbery; hides himself in the room of the innkeeper's daughter, Zerlina, and escapes capture at the hands of her soldier-lover, Lorenzo, by pretending an assignation there; flees to the mountains, is pursued and captured by Lorenzo, and acknowledges Zerlina's innocence before he dies. The music, full of grace and charm, if not of power, includes a bright medley overture and popular march, an effective quarrel scene and quintet, an attractive romanza for Zerlina, a barcarolle for Fra Diavolo, some refreshing mountain songs, and a strong finale.

The light operas of Auber and his compeers, unlike those of the Italian school, are distinctly inferior to their works in the serious

vein. While often displaying the beauty of the national French *chansons*, they are more formal and less animated than their Italian models, and at present seem hopelessly antiquated. *Opéra Comique* in France really meant nothing more than the intrusion of a little spoken dialogue into the score. In the hands of Cherubini and his school, this form was almost wholly devoted to effects of the serious and grand order, and left little scope for true musical comedies. The French *chansons*, however attractive in themselves, were a much weaker basis for operas than the Italian *buffo* acting. As a result, Auber's comedies are nearly forgotten, while those of Donizetti are fairly successful in the struggle for existence.

Although the works of Herold, Auber, and Rossini reflected in some degree the earnest search after a worthy form of art, it remained for Meyerbeer to bring the new style of dramatic grand opera to its highest

consummation. Jacob Meyer Beer, or Giacomo Meyerbeer, as he styled himself after his Italian studies, was born in Berlin, of Jewish parents, in 1791.[1] When hardly more than an infant, he could remember popular tunes and harmonise them properly, and at the early age of seven he played a Mozart concerto in public. It is to the credit of his parents that they gave him a thorough musical education, and were not content with merely cultivating his powers of display on the piano. Disgusted with the rigid severity of his teacher, Zelter, he transferred himself to the more sympathetic care of Bernard Weber, a pupil of Abt Vogler. He soon delighted his new master with a fugue, which the latter sent to the old Abt for approval. Instead of a reply, that worthy, after a few months had elapsed, sent a huge packet of

[1] Nearly all the authorities give 1794 as the date of Meyerbeer's birth, but his birth register and epitaph both indicate 1791 as correct.

manuscript, containing a dissertation on fugal form, a long adverse criticism of Meyerbeer's effusion, and a fugue correctly constructed on the same themes that the young aspirant had employed.

Soon after this voluminous answer, Meyerbeer wrote another fugue for Vogler, and this time received the master's sincere praise, and an invitation from the latter to come to Darmstadt for further study. It was at this time that Meyerbeer formed an intimate acquaintance with Carl Maria von Weber, and elicited from Vogler the encomium that has been quoted in a previous chapter.

During this period Meyerbeer produced his first opera, "Jephthah's Vow," a sacred work that was almost an oratorio in nature. A second work, the comic opera "Alimelek," was performed soon afterward in Munich, but like its predecessor it made little impression. The manager of the Kärntnerthor Theatre in Vienna became interested in it,

but there again it proved a failure when brought out in 1814. At this time Meyerbeer began to feel despondent and think that he had mistaken his vocation, but the wise counsels of the veteran Salieri consoled him. By the latter's advice he set out for Italy, that country of fluent song that gave to its composers such facility in vocal writing that many of them forgot matter in manner and degenerated into manufacturers of vocal exercises.

Italy was under the spell of Rossini's magic, but nevertheless Meyerbeer succeeded in winning many popular triumphs. His works now showed the easy flow of the Italian style, but there was in them not a little real musical power in the development of themes, and in the ensemble passages.[1] To this period belong "Romilda e Costanza," "Emma

[1] Mendel ("Biography of Meyerbeer," p. 31) claims that Meyerbeer's solid musical attainments had a noticeable influence upon the work of Donizetti and Verdi.

di Resburgo," "Margherita d'Anjou," and several other operas.

Meanwhile the composer's German friends, including Weber, lamented his worship of false gods, and urged him to return to the shrine of his native German art. Partly in response to their pleading, and partly because he himself was ripe for more earnest efforts, he wrote a German opera, "Das Brandenburger Thor;" but his "Crociato in Egitto" (Venice, 1824) showed more definitely that he was capable of higher things than what Beethoven called the "Italian sing-song." This latter composition is a sort of connecting link between the superficial works of his Italian sojourn and the dramatic triumphs of his later days.

During the next few years Meyerbeer's duties and studies took him occasionally to Germany, but Paris, that Mecca of foreign artists, soon became his permanent home. Here the master of Italian fluency and Ger-

man harmony did not disdain to begin anew a course of study, and he made himself thoroughly familiar with all the composers of the French school, from Lully down to his own day. Here, too, he found in Eugene Scribe a librettist, who, if at times superficial, was in many ways a worthy compeer of the great musician.

It was not until 1831 that Meyerbeer first revealed his newly developed powers. In that year he brought out "Robert le Diable," a work that aroused unparalleled enthusiasm, made the fortune of the Paris opera-house, and won world-wide fame for its composer.

The book of "Robert" is decidedly fantastic, and would have been more so but for Meyerbeer. The scene is laid in Sicily, where the dare-devil Robert of Normandy has come to compete in a magnificent tournament for the hand of the duke's daughter, Isabella. Robert's foster-sister Alice tries to lead him into steady courses, but he is

constantly tempted by Bertram, who is in reality his demon father in the human form he had assumed to win the love of the Duchess Bertha, Robert's mother. Bertram leads Robert to the gaming-table, where the young knight loses everything, including the horse and armour that were to have served him in the tournament. Bertram then persuades him to win magic power by plucking a branch of cypress from his mother's tomb. He does this, amid orgies of the spirits of false nuns, and is enabled by supernatural power to enter Isabella's room with a view to carrying her off; but he yields to her pleading, and breaks the branch, thus destroying his evil power. Bertram, who must make Robert yield to his influence within a certain time, if at all, again tries to tempt him. But Alice, aware of Bertram's plight through having overheard him in a previous scene, brings Robert his mother's warning, and delays the knight's decision until mid-

night strikes. Bertram then vanishes in despair, and the scene changes to a cathedral where Isabella, in her wedding robes, awaits her rescued lover.

In this work Meyerbeer gave the first exhibition of his wonderful mastery of instrumentation. The monotony of the earlier Italian style had disappeared, and in its place were effects of great power and contrast. The music, instead of wandering along in pleasant but aimless paths of its own, gave a true emphasis to the spirit of the words, and in many passages (especially the rising of the ghostly nuns) added a really dramatic intensity to the scene.

"Les Huguenots," produced in 1836, possesses a much more legitimate, if more sanguinary, plot. Marguerite de Valois, hoping to reconcile Catholics and Protestants, arranges a match between Raoul de Nangis, a Huguenot noble, and Valentine, daughter of the Catholic Count de St. Bris. Raoul, who

has seen Valentine visit the house of De Nevers, to break off her formal engagement to him, places a wrong construction on the affair, and rejects her, thinking the whole project merely a plan to entrap him. He challenges St. Bris, while the latter, in revenge for the slight to his daughter, plots Raoul's assassination. Valentine, who has overheard the details, warns Raoul's faithful servant Marcel, who saves his master. Raoul then hears that he owes his life to Valentine, who loves him in spite of her engagement to De Nevers. This news comes too late, however, and her marriage to De Nevers takes place. Raoul, while bidding a final farewell to Valentine, overhears the Catholic nobles and priests planning the massacre of St. Bartholomew. When they leave, Valentine begs him to remain and save his life; but honour prevails, and, after a scene of passionate intensity, he rushes forth to the combat.

The play is usually ended at this point, with a suggestion of the massacre. In the complete opera, Raoul brings warning to Marguerite at her marriage ball, and then makes his way to a chapel, where the Huguenots have gathered for refuge. Here he is joined by Valentine, who brings news of De Nevers's death. The lovers are united in marriage by the wounded Marcel, and the trio then shot down by the soldiers of St. Bris.

Here again Meyerbeer put forth all the dramatic power that has made his later works so effective. Despite the enormous length displayed by the French grand operas of this period, "Les Huguenots" contains many passages of supreme beauty. Marcel's powerful battle song ("Piff Paff"), the bright gaiety of the garden scene, the "Rataplan" of the Huguenot soldiers, and the impressive "Benediction of the Poignards" are made of truly dramatic material, while Raoul's

farewell to Valentine affords a climax that remains undimmed by the lapse of years.

"Le Prophète" (1843) was less universally successful, doubtless owing to the weakness of Scribe's libretto. The hero, John of Leyden, loves Bertha, a maiden of Dordrecht, but the Count of Oberthal, who is smitten by her beauty, seizes her for himself. She escapes and claims John's protection, but the count compels him to give her up by threatening to torture John's old mother, Fides. Wild with rage, John joins the revolutionary Anabaptists, and becomes their leader. After they capture the city of Munster, a magnificent service is held in the cathedral, and John is proclaimed Son of God. His mother, who recognises him, is led off to prison for impiety. Bertha stabs herself in despair, and John, who has been betrayed by some of his own subordinates, destroys his enemies and himself by blowing up the palace.

Although lacking in popular favour, "Le

Prophète" contains a few of the most vigorous passages that Meyerbeer ever wrote. It includes some scenes of splendid pageantry, but the coronation is rather too replete with confusing details for the best effect.

The overture and incidental music to "Struensee" (1846), though hardly forming a complete opera, deserve at least a passing mention. In this work, Meyerbeer showed himself possessed of all the dignity and discretion necessary for purely orchestral work. The overture, in fact, is his worthiest achievement in sustained instrumental composition.

"L'Africaine," the last of Meyerbeer's serious operas, was not produced until after the composer's death in 1864, though Scribe had given him the book in 1838. During the absence of the famous voyager, Vasco de Gama, Inez, his betrothed, is given by the king to Don Pedro, who persuades his master that Vasco must be lost. But the hero returns just in time, bringing two slaves,

Selika and Nelusko, whom he had captured on a wonderful island in the Indian Ocean. Through Don Pedro's intrigues, Vasco is imprisoned, and Inez, to gain his liberty, must give her hand to Don Pedro. The latter steals a march on Vasco by embarking for the Indian Isle, taking with him Inez and the two slaves. Vasco, who has followed, overtakes his rival's vessel in time to give warning of treachery, but his words are ignored. Nelusko wrecks the ship on the island, and the lives of the party are saved from the natives only by the power of Selika, who is their queen. Selika, who loves Vasco, wishes to marry him, but, on learning of his love for Inez, she generously sends the pair home in Vasco's ship, and poisons herself in despair.

Though many of the situations are artificial, the libretto still contains numerous scenes of great beauty, which Meyerbeer has set to the best advantage in his usual

virile manner. But in this opera there is less striving after grandeur, and more suavity, than in the preceding works, and it is in some degree a reversion to the Italian methods.

Meyerbeer's two efforts in the field of *Opéra Comique* are of little historical importance. "L'Étoile du Nord" (1854) is a story of the rise and adventures of Peter the Great and his companion Catherine, afterward his empress on the throne of Russia. The lighter parts of the work show much vivacity and brightness, but at times it is marred by lapses into the grandiose style, and there is a needless scene of vocal display for the prima donna.

"Dinorah" deals with a vaguely presented Breton legend of buried treasure, and the fortunes of the two poor peasants, Hoel and Dinorah, who seek for it. The music, especially in the heroine's part, contains many brilliant passages, but the libretto is too ab-

surd for presentation to-day. The overture, which Berlioz praised so extravagantly, is a long-winded piece of programme music, picturing a series of events that lead up to the actual plot.

Seldom has the work of any man received such widely different estimates as that of Meyerbeer. His great biographer, Mendel, who praises him extravagantly, quotes an old saying of Mattheson, to the effect that Germany excelled in harmony and part-writing, Italy in melody and singing, and France in choruses, instrumentation, and ballet. Mendel then adds: "How correctly is Meyerbeer's music described when one calls it the expression of all these different national excellences."[1] Wagner, on the other hand, is unsparing in his attacks on the blatant vulgarity of Meyerbeer's style, and even the gentle Schumann accused him of "going over to the circus" in his music.

[1] Biography of Meyerbeer, p. 39.

The truth lies between these two extremes. Meyerbeer was a man of great powers, and was able to develop his own gifts in an eclectic manner, assimilating the good of various styles. But he possessed no high aim, no lofty inward ideal that would lead him in the paths of truth. He wrote what he thought the public wished, and instead of educating popular taste he surrendered to it. His music is often true to the spirit of the words, but just as often it becomes meaningless vocal padding. Many of his scenes are powerful, but at times they become too sensational, and pass from the dramatic to what is often designated as the melodramatic. The librettos, too, are not always coherent plays, but consist of a set of detached scenes, and while Meyerbeer often handled his scenes properly according to the principles of Peri and Gluck, he did not rise, as Wagner did, to a point where he could treat opera as a complete artistic whole.

Yet posterity must still accord him full meed of praise for the excellent work that he did perform.

Halevy (1799–1862), pupil of Berton and Cherubini, followed the lead of Herold in his earlier works, but was by no means a mere imitator. His many light operas show much versatility of style. They are entitled to rank with any of their time, and are worthy examples of the last great period of *Opéra Comique*. Their chief fault was a vagueness, a lack of definite power of expression, that at times made them dull and tedious. But in spite of much that is hazy and meaningless, his music as a whole deserves far more admiration than his own countrymen have accorded to it. He is by turns tender and expressive, grand and lofty, graceful and delicate, bright and sparkling, and his work never falls below a certain level of value.

His greatest opera, "La Juive" (1835), is

full of a sober dignity that compels admiration, despite its gory plot. The disguised Prince Leopold has won the love of Rachel, daughter of the rich Jew, Eleazar, of Constance. By accident she discovers Leopold's identity, and as he is the husband of the Princess Eudoxia, she makes a public denunciation of his perfidy. The cardinal then excommunicates Leopold, and the trio are thrown into prison to await his sentence. Here Rachel yields to the pleadings of the wronged Eudoxia, and retracts her accusation. Leopold is freed, but Rachel and Eleazar are condemned to death for their apparent plot against a Christian. The two victims are thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, but not before Eleazar has had time to reveal the fact that Rachel is not his own child, but a daughter of the cardinal, saved during infancy from a burning building.

Of the lesser men of the time, Adam (1803–56) failed in grand opera, but in the

lighter vein may be regarded as the successor of Auber and Boieldieu. His greatest work, "Le Postilion de Longjumeau," is still given at times in Germany and France, but many of his operas, with their trivial tunes, flimsy ensembles, numerous dances, and cheap librettos, were well-marked indications of the decline that has since become so painfully evident in light operas. David (1810–76) was more at home in character delineation than in dramatic effect, and his "Lalla Rookh" is an excellent example of ease in expression. His best work, however, is "Le Desert," an impressive operatic cantata descriptive of life in the East, — a composition that showed for the first time the great possibilities of oriental colouring.

Although not exercising an important influence on the history of opera, Hector Berlioz (1803–69) deserves mention as one of the most colossal and original of musical giants that ever lived. He was an ardent

supporter of truth in tonal expression, but he went even farther than other composers, and insisted that music itself suggested ideas, and could be made to tell its own story. This enthusiasm for what is known as programme-music resulted in the production of his two great symphonies, the "Childe Harold" and the "Fantastic," each of which has a distinct plot. But, like Meyerbeer's overture to "Dinorah," they do not attain the best effects, for music cannot well express definite objects and facts, but must confine itself to emotions rather than events.

Despite his grandiose style and intricate orchestration (Wagner said of him that he ciphered with notes), his two single operas, "Benvenuto Cellini" and "Beatrice et Benedict," contain many beauties. The latter especially, a bright setting of "Much Ado About Nothing," displays many passages of the most tender grace and delicacy.

Aiming for vastness in his symphonic

effects, Berlioz must needs strive also to increase the size of opera. His great double drama, "Les Troyens," is a not unworthy attempt to set the plot of Virgil's Æneid. "La Prise de Troie," the first part, is epic rather than dramatic, but as a whole it reflects in an impressive manner the spacious majesty of the Mantuan bard. "Les Troyens à Carthage," the second part of the work, admits of more romantic treatment, and is replete with picturesque scenes of great pathos and power.

Berlioz drew his inspiration from Gluck, and aimed to illustrate the earlier master's principles with all the resources of the modern grand orchestra. His music contains much that is noble, much that is of inestimable value for the student of composition, but little of importance in the development of opera. Just as Scarlatti and his followers committed the error of making their music contrapuntal instead of dramatic,

so Berlioz fell into the habit of making all his accompaniments symphonic in style. Yet his music, if not cast in the true operatic form, contains so many beauties, and shows such vast grandeur, that he may justly be accorded the rank of France's greatest composer, and his operas form a good pendant to the more effective works of Meyerbeer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WAGNERIAN LIBRETTOS.

WHILE Italy had been revelling in the joys of trivial melody, and France had thrilled to the dramatic power of the sensational style, Germany went placidly on her path in the development of a truer art, and witnessed the triumphs of men who have made her music immortal. To the names of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert were now added those of Schumann and Mendelssohn. But many of these musical Titans were content to base their fame chiefly, if not wholly, upon purely orchestral works. It remained for one master-spirit to apply all the wealth and beauty of his imagination to the lyric stage, and

place opera on a level with symphony and sonata in true musical worth.

In many of the different schools of music, the evolution has been gradual. So, too, in Germany, Wagner drew his inspiration from Beethoven and Weber. But the deep earnestness of the former was too ponderous for the ever-changing effects of the stage, while the rare invention of the latter was allied to a style of opera that was already becoming archaic. When Wagner appeared, endowed with the rich heritage of his national music, he united with his own innate genius an unerring dramatic instinct, with the result that his works have become the recognised masterpieces of opera and his influence even to-day dominates the entire world. Musicians are now a unit in admitting that German opera is by far the highest development of the lyric drama, and German opera is almost wholly summed up in the name of Richard Wagner.

His first opera, "The Fairies," written during the composer's twenty-first year (1833), is in the style of Weber and Marschner. It deals with the trials of a fairy who loved a mortal, and the final admission of the latter into fairyland. Though displaying some moments of originality, it is a juvenile work, and when recently revived in Munich it was given more as a curiosity than as a legitimate opera.

The next production, "Das Liebesverbot," is an adaptation of Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," set to music that is an unblushing imitation of Donizetti and Bellini.

With "Rienzi," composed about 1840, Wagner began to show some merit in his own right. The work is in the style of Spontini and other masters of classical fame. It is no longer a servile imitation, however, but possesses intrinsic value of its own. Wagner had not yet begun his life-campaign for a national German opera, but in arrang-

ing his libretto he showed all the skill that he was to employ later on in his music-dramas.

The play opens at night, in a Roman street. Orsini and his adherents attempt to abduct Rienzi's sister Irene, when the sudden entrance of Colonna and his followers leads to a dispute over the possession of the girl. Adriano, the son of Colonna, really loves Irene, and hastens to protect her from the violence of the combatants. In the midst of this new diversion, Rienzi himself enters, leading the people in a revolt against the oppressive nobles. Adriano, after an inward conflict, joins the popular cause. In the second act, the nobles sue for pardon from Rienzi, who has been created tribune by the victorious people. Despite Adriano's warning he grants the request, only to have his mercy requited by an attempt to kill him at the reconciliation feast. The nobles are again condemned, but spared again at

Adriano's prayer. In the third act, the nobles, in defiance of their oath, marshal an army. This time Adriano's pleadings cannot prevent the conflict, and the nobles are defeated and Colonna put to death. Adriano then vows vengeance upon his father's slayer. In the fourth act, the people themselves begin to suspect Rienzi, and Adriano foments their discontent. The tribune appears, and in a speech of noble patriotism wins back their allegiance, but suddenly the papal legate issues from the church and announces Rienzi's excommunication. His friends desert him in horror, Irene alone remaining. In the last act, Rienzi, after a vain attempt to regain popular support, retreats with his sister to the capitol. The enraged people fire the place, and the pair perish in the flames, together with Adriano, who has joined them out of love for Irene.

In "The Flying Dutchman," completed

during the next year, the beginnings of Wagner's own peculiar style became evident. So far as the librettos were concerned, his ideas demanded that the composer should be his own poet, that the play should be based on some national legend as was the case in the old Greek tragedies, and that the drama should possess intrinsic merit and be always of paramount importance, while the music should reflect its emotions faithfully. The last point is nothing more than a repetition of Gluck's idea, but Wagner always carried out his reforms with a thoroughness that has hardly ever been equalled, and can never be excelled. One result was that in his later work he produced stage plays that are models of poetic beauty and literary skill, apart from any musical setting. Even the "Flying Dutchman," outlined before the completion of "Rienzi," conforms to the principles that Wagner established in his later essays on opera. Its libretto, instead of containing the

crimes and intrigues so common in Italian works, is based on a well-known legend of peculiar charm, full of the wild power of the surging ocean.

"The Flying Dutchman" opens in a rocky cove on the Norwegian coast, where the skipper Daland has taken refuge from a storm. To the same spot comes also the Flying Dutchman with his gloomy vessel. He is that mariner who boasted that his skill would steer him safely in spite of Heaven itself, and who was doomed, because of that blasphemy, to sail the seas for ever. He can be saved only by finding a maiden willing to sacrifice her life for him, and once in seven years he is allowed to land in search of her. He now issues from his ship in despairing mood, but receives a warm greeting from Daland, and on showing the latter the wealth amassed during the endless voyage, the Dutchman wins permission from him to woo his daughter Senta.

In the second act, at Daland's home, Senta stands apart from a group of girls who are making merry over their spinning-wheels, and gazes earnestly at a picture of the mysterious Flying Dutchman. When chided for her sadness, she tells them the story of the ill-fated mariner, and asserts that she will save him. Not even the entrance of her admirer Erik can alter her mood, though he announces the approach of Daland and an unknown guest. When the Dutchman appears, Senta is transfixed with astonishment, and, after the others depart, she vows her life to his salvation, and they plight their troth.

In the third act the sailors are rejoicing by the harbour. The Dutchman's ship, however, is silent, and when its crew are invited to share the festival, the aged mariners appear in supernatural light, and sing a weird song taunting their captain with his failures as a lover. Silence then falls upon

the scene until Senta appears. Erik again pleads his love, and the Dutchman, overhearing him, thinks Senta false, and prepares to set sail. She endeavours to reach the ship, but is held back, and the Dutchman, not wishing to drag her into his hard fate, proclaims his identity to all. Senta, freeing herself, plunges into the sea after him, and wins his redemption by sacrificing her life.

"Tannhäuser," the next opera, is more thoroughly German in character. When the Grecian gods fled before Christianity, Venus, according to a popular legend, established her court beneath the hill of Hörselberg, in Thuringia. Here the minstrel knight Tannhäuser is revelling in sinful pleasure, but after a time his continual orgy palls upon him, and he wishes to return to the upper world. Despite the pleading and temptation of the goddess, he remains firm, and finally he calls upon the sainted name of Mary, whereupon the whole magic grotto disappears

in an instant. Tannhäuser finds himself in a grassy valley, listening to the piping of a shepherd and the tinkling sheep-bells. The chant of passing pilgrims arouses his conscience still more, and in this state he is found by a hunting party that consists of the landgrave Herrmann, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Walther von der Vogelweide, and other minstrel troubadours of the Wartburg. They urge him to join them, and although remorse at first makes him refuse, the mention of the landgrave's niece Elisabeth, who has pined during the knight's mysterious absence, at last makes him yield.

The second act depicts the Hall of Song in the Wartburg. Elisabeth enters with a greeting to the well-remembered place, and Tannhäuser is then led in by Wolfram. After their salutations, the guests assemble for the tournament of song, and the landgrave announces as its subject the praise of love, hinting that Elisabeth's hand is to be the



SCENE FROM "TANNHÄUSER."

victor's prize. In the knightly contest, Wolfram sings of his chaste ideal, Walther of his homage to virtuous purity, while the warrior Biterolf praises the chivalrous passion of the soldier. Meanwhile Tannhäuser, a prey to his memories of Venus, interrupts each one in turn, with increasing vehemence, and at length bursts out with a wild hymn in praise of the goddess. The women rush from the hall in horror, while the men prepare to take summary vengeance upon the self-convicted sinner. Elisabeth's pleading saves him, however, and he falls prostrate in repentance. Again is heard the chant of passing pilgrims, and the despairing Tannhäuser rushes from the hall to join them and obtain pardon at Rome.

The third act returns to the valley, now decked with autumnal hues. Here Elisabeth, as is her habit, awaits the returning pilgrims in hope of her lover's arrival. After her prayer to a wayside shrine of the Virgin, she

hears the distant pilgrim chant, but as the band draws near and passes, Tannhäuser is not to be seen among them. In despair she returns to the castle, leaving Wolfram to lament his own hopeless love for her. Tannhäuser now appears, with the Pope's verdict that "Sooner shall his dead staff put forth leaves than Tannhäuser be forgiven." The knight determines to return to Venus, despite Wolfram's entreaty, and, at his call, she appears at the mouth of her grotto. But a funeral procession now approaches, bearing the body of Elisabeth, who has died, heart-broken. Tannhäuser sinks lifeless by the bier, while a second band of pilgrims appears with the Pope's staff, which has blossomed in sign of pardon for the knight.

Even more attractive than the preceding is the beautiful romance of "Lohengrin." Elsa of Brabant, whose brother, the young Duke Gottfried, has disappeared, is charged with his murder by Frederick of Telramund.



ARRIVAL OF LOHENGRIN,
"Lohengrin."

Frederick is urged to this act by his wife, the envious pagan sorceress Ortrud, who has herself bewitched Gottfried. King Henry the Fowler, who is judging the case in a field on the banks of the Scheldt, has allowed Elsa a champion, but within the past three days' time none had appeared to uphold her innocence. The herald arranges the combat and calls twice without result. Before his last appeal, Elsa relates a strange dream, in which a champion for her cause came down the river in a boat drawn by a swan. The people at first think her mad, but, as she proceeds, those nearest the bank gaze up the river with growing excitement, and at last her knight actually appears as she describes him, apparelled in resplendent armour. He lands and enters the lists, where he defeats Telramund with ease, but spares his life. To Elsa, who has accepted him as her lover, he gives the command that she must never ask his name.

In the second act, Telramund and Ortrud are crouching on the steps of the church, in the darkness of night. Elsa, full of happiness, appears opposite them on the balcony of the palace, and, while Telramund hides in the church, Ortrud accosts her with mock humility. The outcast soon wins the pity and forgiveness of the innocent girl, and is taken into the palace. After the break of day the people gather to witness the wedding. As the bridal train approaches, Ortrud's suppressed malevolence bursts out, and she claims precedence over Elsa, taunting her with ignorance of her bridegroom's name. The unknown champion then arrives with the knights, but he has scarcely calmed Elsa before Telramund appears and accuses him of sorcery. Telramund and Ortrud are thrust aside, and the wedding procession enters the church, but the wiles of the wicked couple have aroused Elsa's curiosity.

In the third act, the wedded pair are brought to their chamber with the strains of the well-known bridal chorus. There, after an enchanting love-scene, Elsa yields to her mistrust, and, despite her husband's pleadings, puts the forbidden question to him. After he kills Telramund, who breaks in to assassinate him, he tells her that her question has put an end to all their happiness. Next day, by the river, he proclaims himself as Lohengrin, knight of the Holy Grail, who is not permitted to remain on earth when known. Before leaving the forlorn Elsa, he disenchants the swan, who proves to be her lost brother Gottfried.

"Tristan and Isolde," as will be seen in the next chapter, is the first of the so-called music-dramas. In this and the later operas the music has assumed a definite structure in relation to the words and ideas of the plot, but the story, as in the three preceding works, is drawn from legendary lore. King Mark of

Cornwall seeks the hand of Isolde, daughter of the King of Ireland, and sends his nephew Tristan to bring her to England. Tristan and Isolde have met before, and love each other, so the princess is indignant that the knight should dare to woo her for another. On the vessel, whose decks form the scene of the first act, she bids her maid Brangaene fill a goblet with poison, and summons Tristan from the helm to share the draught with her. But Brangaene has substituted a love philtre, and while the shouts of the sailors announce their arrival, the young lovers find themselves drawn together by an overmastering passion.

The second act shows Isolde watching in the king's garden. The horns of the king's hunting party are heard dying away in the far distance, and in spite of Brangaene's entreaties she gives the signal she has arranged for Tristan, and soon the pair are together. Amid the flowers of the garden they pour

forth their passion in strains of enchanting beauty, heedless of the warning of Brangaene. At length the king and his attendants rush in, and Mark, overwhelmed with sorrow, reproaches his nephew for treachery. Tristan calls upon Isolde to follow him, while Melot, one of his enemies, rushes forward and stabs him.

In the third act Tristan is lying wounded and unconscious in his Brittany castle, whither his faithful squire Kurwenal has brought him. Kurwenal is watching for Isolde, but at first he sees only the shepherd piping in the fields. At length her ship approaches, and Tristan, in delirium, tears off his bandages. Isolde enters in time to receive his dying words, when suddenly a second ship approaches, bearing Mark. The king, who has learned of Isolde's earlier love, has come to bring forgiveness, but Kurwenal, unaware of this, meets his death in an effort to defend the castle, while Isolde, heartbroken over Tris-

tan's fate, chants her own death-song and falls lifeless beside him.

"Die Meistersinger," Wagner's one comic opera, possesses a rich humour and pointed satire not unworthy of the pen of an Aristophanes, while under it all is a vein of tender sympathy that cannot fail to touch the heart. Walther von Stolzing, a young Franconian knight, awaits Eva, daughter of the goldsmith Pogner, after the service in St. Catherine's church in old Nuremberg. The pair have fallen in love at first sight, but Eva is to be given as bride to the winner in the contest of the master-singers, on the next day, the festival of St. John. Her maid, Magdalena, loves David, the apprentice of Hans Sachs, and at Eva's bidding orders her sweetheart to instruct Walther in the rules of the guild. The tuition of the hide-bound apprentice, however, is of little use, and Walther determines to trust to his own innate genius. Meanwhile the younger apprentices, under

the lead of David, set up the marker's stand for the masters' meeting, chaffing David royally until the masters themselves assemble. The roll is called, Pogner announces that Eva's hand is to be the prize in the next day's contest, and Walther is introduced as an aspirant for membership. The sour, crabbed Beckmesser is chosen marker, and all Walther's inspiration is invisible through his pedantic spectacles, so the young knight, despite the loveliness of his trial-song, fails to gain entrance to the guild. Hans Sachs alone is able to see the beauty of its measures, and in a heated dispute he upholds the knight, but numbers finally prevail, and the masters depart, leaving Walther disconsolate.

The second act shows the narrow street between Pogner's house and the shoemaker's shop of Sachs. After the return of the people to their homes, Sachs looks out into the fragrant air of the summer night, when

Eva approaches to learn Walther's fate. Sachs, who loves Eva, now discovers where her affections are placed, and nobly determines to help the young lovers. Walther comes to persuade Eva to elope, but the passing of the night watchman forces them into the shade of the linden-tree by Pogner's house, and Sachs then brings his work-bench into the open air. At this point the ridiculous Beckmesser approaches, and tunes his lute for a serenade to Eva. Magdalena, who has taken Eva's place at the window to aid the elopement, becomes the object of his attentions. On seeing Sachs, Beckmesser asserts that the song is one he is rehearsing for the morrow's contest, and the cobbler agrees to mark its mistakes by hammering at his work. The ludicrous serenade now proceeds, and, after constant hammering from Sachs, David appears, and pitches into the unlucky minstrel for daring to serenade his Magdalena. Gradually the shutters of the

other houses open, and their inmates come out, with the result that a nocturnal riot fills the entire street for a time, after which the act ends with the reappearance of the belated and timid watchman.

The last act shows Sachs in his room, reading an ancient volume and brooding on the vanity of the world. Walther, whom Sachs took into his house after the riot, now appears and relates a wonderful dream he has had. Sachs writes down the notes of the dream-song, correcting them according to the masters' rules. After the pair leave the room, Beckmesser enters, still sore from his beating, and in peering about he discovers the newly written song. He tries to appropriate it, knowing the worth of a song by Sachs, but is caught in the act. The shrewd cobbler then presents the song to him, foreseeing that his use of it will accrue to Walther's benefit. After his departure, Eva enters in festal array, David is promoted to

be a journeyman, and all prepare for the day's pageant.

The scene then changes to a meadow by the banks of the Pegnitz. The people and apprentices are joyfully awaiting the contest. One by one the guilds of the city march in, each with its song and emblem, and finally the masters arrive. Beckmesser then mounts the grassy throne where the singers must stand, and begins his song. He tries to give the notes on the stolen manuscript as his own, but, as Sachs had expected, his memory plays him false, and the result is a comical parody that drifts gradually into the fusty serenade of the previous night. Beckmesser, goaded by popular ridicule, then cries that the song is by Sachs. The latter, by announcing its real author, gains Walther the coveted chance to sing it before the masters and win Eva as his bride.

"Parsifal," the "stage-consecration-play," is semi-religious in character. Amfortas,



UNCOVERING THE HOLY GRAIL,.
"Parsifal."

king of the Holy Grail knights, has been allured by Kundry into the garden of the evil magician, Klingsor. There Amfortas drops the holy spear, and Klingsor, grasping it, wounds him. Amfortas, lying in agony in his own Holy Grail castle, cannot recover unless touched by the spear, which can be wrested from Klingsor only by one who is ignorant of sin and can resist temptation. The play opens in a glade near the castle, where the young Parsifal kills one of the sacred swans. The knight Gurnemanz, thinking this may be the innocent one who is to free the king, takes him into the castle, where he witnesses the ceremony of the uncovering of the Grail and the communion of the knights, who draw their sustenance wholly from the sacred bread and wine. But Parsifal fails to ask the meaning of the occasion, so Gurnemanz thrusts him out in disappointment.

In the second act, Kundry, who is a slave

to the evil power of Klingsor, is forced to lie in wait for Parsifal in the magic garden. The young knight comes, and is lost in innocent admiration of the beautiful scene and the frolics of the graceful flower-girls. Kundry then calls him to her, and subjects him to all her temptations. But her kiss, instead of enslaving him to her charms, brings to him a knowledge of the evil to which Amfortas yielded. Finding her pleadings rejected, she calls upon Klingsor for aid. He appears, and hurls the sacred spear at Parsifal; it remains suspended above the knight, who grasps it and makes the sign of the cross, thus destroying the garden and releasing Kundry.

In the last act, which takes place on Good Friday, Gurnemanz is found marvelling at the change in Kundry. When Parsifal arrives with the sacred spear, he is baptised by Gurnemanz and anointed by Kundry. The scene then changes again to the castle,

where Amfortas, despite his pain, must once more uncover the Grail for his knights. Just as he bids them slay him and end his agony, Parsifal approaches with the spear. Amfortas is healed by its touch, and Parsifal, after uncovering the Grail, is made king and receives the homage of the willing knights.

The great Trilogy is a setting of the Nibelungenlied, with a liberal infusion of Norse mythology. It is a music-epic rather than a music-drama, consisting of four full-sized divisions (three operas and a prelude), which can be given separately, but form a complete whole.

"Das Rheingold," the prelude to the Trilogy, depicts the events that cause all the subsequent plans and conflicts. The first scene shows the depths of the river Rhine, with the three Rhinedaughters circling to and fro about the golden Rhine treasure, which they guard. Alberich, king of the Nibelungs, or subterranean dwarfs, enters

and woos the maidens in his rough way. As the sunlight gleams upon the rich hoard, they reveal to him the secret that its possessor, should he renounce love, could forge from it a ring that would enable him to rule the world. Moved by the thought of power, Alberich makes this renunciation, and tears away the treasure.

Meanwhile the gods, upon a lofty mountain, are waiting to enter their new castle Walhalla, built by the giants Fafner and Fasolt. The latter have demanded in payment Freia, the goddess of youth, but Loge, the fire-god, who has been sent to find a ransom for her, returns with news of the Rhine treasure, which the giants agree to accept.

The scene then changes to Niffelheim, the work-shop of the dwarfs, where Alberich has had fashioned from the gold a magic ring and a helmet of invisibility. Wotan and Loge enter, and find Mime, who complains

of his brother Alberich's harshness. When Alberich appears, the gods persuade him to exhibit his new helmet and its power of transformation, and, while he is in the shape of a toad, they capture him and bear him to the upper world.

On the mountain, Alberich is forced to order his dwarfs to bring up the treasure, but, in parting with the ring, he utters a curse upon it that shall bring misfortune to all who possess it until it is restored to its original owner. The giants now appear, and claim all the hoard, including the ring, whose magic power Wotan had hoped to use for himself. The curse begins to show its effect, and Fafner kills Fasolt in order to own the whole treasure. After his departure, Donner, the thunder-god, smites a rock with his hammer, and a rainbow bridge is revealed, over which the gods march into their celestial abode of Walhalla.

Between the close of the "Rheingold"

and the opening of "Die Walküre," the first opera of the actual Trilogy, some events have taken place. Wotan, wishing to ward off the attacks of the Nibelungs, has detailed the nine Valkyries, daughters of himself and the prophetess Erda, to bring to Walhalla all the heroes who are slain in battle. To escape the evil influence of Alberich's curse, he has descended to earth and begotten the Volsung twins, Siegmund and Sieglinde. These he leaves to be trained in the school of adversity, hoping that Siegmund will kill Fafner, and restore the gold to the Rhine-daughters.

When the play opens, Siegmund is driven by his foes to take refuge in the home of Hunding, Sieglinde's husband. The brother and sister, unknown to each other, are attracted by mutual sympathy, and when the burly Hunding enters he bids the stranger welcome. At the simple evening meal which follows, Siegmund, requested to relate his

adventures, proves to be an enemy of Hunding, who bids him prepare for mortal combat on the morrow. Left alone by the fire, Siegmund calls in despair for a sword which his father has promised to provide for him in the hour of his direst need. The firelight flashes on the hilt of a sword buried in the ash-tree that supports the roof, but Siegmund does not recognise it. Sieglinde then appears with the news that she has drugged Hunding, and relates that she was forced to marry him, but on her wedding-day an unknown stranger plunged the sword in the ash-tree to be the prize of the one who could draw it out. Siegmund does this, and the amorous pair, now recognising each other, flee together.

In the next act Wotan, in a rocky fastness on a mountain, bids his favourite Valkyrie Brunnhilde help Siegmund in the approaching fight with Hunding. But Fricka, his consort, then enters, and, in her capacity as

protectress of the marriage vow, she demands that the sinful Siegmund shall die. After a lengthy argument Wotan yields, and she leaves him. Wotan then confides his hopes to Brunnhilde, but bids her obey Fricka's mandate, and they, too, depart. Siegmund and Sieglinde enter, and the wearied woman sinks into a deep sleep. Brunnhilde then reappears to warn Siegmund of his fate, but she is so moved by his noble bravery and his love for Sieglinde that she decides to save him, in accordance with Wotan's secret wish. Hunding then approaches, and the warriors, after calling to and fro in the darkness and the storm, meet upon a lofty rock. Brunnhilde aids Siegmund, but suddenly Wotan appears, and, with his spear, shatters the Volsung's sword. Siegmund falls, and Wotan, after killing Hunding with a contemptuous wave of his spear, departs.

The third act shows another rugged scene, where four of the Valkyries are gathered

after their celestial ride. Amid their wild, joyous cries, and the whinnying of their horses, the others gradually arrive, until at last Brunnhilde appears, seeking protection from the angered Wotan. Her sisters dare not shield her, and Sieglinde, whom she has brought, is forced to flee to the forest for refuge. Wotan and the disobedient Brunnhilde are now left alone, and, in a scene of exquisite pathos, she endeavours to soften her father's wrath. He may not spare her, however, despite his love for her, and she is condemned to lie asleep on the mountain top and be the bride of the first man who finds her. She pleads for mitigation of the cruel sentence, and, at her entreaty, Wotan summons Loge, and surrounds her with a magic ring of fire, through which none but the bravest hero can pass to win her.

Before the opening of "Siegfried," the next drama, another period of time has elapsed. Sieglinde found refuge with the

dwarf Mime, who had taken up his abode in the forest to watch Fafner. The latter had changed himself into a dragon to guard the Rhine treasure. Sieglinde died in giving birth to Siegfried, and Mime brought him up in hopes that he could weld the fragments of Siegmund's sword and slay Fafner with it.

In the first act, Mime is discovered at work over his forge. The boisterous young Siegfried enters, and, at his demand, is told the story of his birth, and shown the fragments of the sword. He rushes out again to the forest, bidding Mime forge the sword anew, but it defies all the dwarf's efforts. Wotan then enters in disguise, and in an exchange of riddles with Mime, during which the latter forfeits his head, tells him that only a fearless hero can forge the pieces. This episode advances the drama very little, but it rehearses the previous events, and foreshadows Siegfried's achievements. After Wotan's exit, Siegfried enters,

and in a spirited scene welds the broken fragments again into a sword.

The second act takes place in a forest glade, whither Mime has brought Siegfried to kill the dragon. Left alone, Siegfried muses upon the enchanting beauty of the forest, with its myriad bird-calls and rustling leaves. At length Fafner emerges from his cave, to be slain by the young hero. A taste of the dragon's blood, which has spattered on Siegfried's hand, gives him power to understand the songs of the birds, and read the thoughts of the dwarf. Seeing that the latter, who now approaches, intends to poison him and own the hoard alone, Siegfried kills Mime. The birds then tell him of Brunnhilde asleep on the mountain, and he leaves to seek her.

In the third act Wotan tries to bar the way of the young hero, but his spear is shattered by the sword, and the waning might of the gods thus yields to human

achievement. Siegfried pierces the fiery ring, and wakens the beautiful sleeper, while Brunnhilde, now no longer a goddess, shows her human character by responding to his love.

"Die Götterdämmerung," the "Twilight of the Gods," opens with a prologue on Brunnhilde's rock. The three Norns, or Fates, are seen spinning the destiny of the gods, until at last the thread breaks. After they depart, day dawns, and Siegfried and Brunnhilde appear. As a pledge of their troth, he gives her the fateful ring, and receives in return her horse Grane. He then departs in search of adventure, and his horn-calls gradually die in the distance.

After an orchestral interlude descriptive of his journey, the first act opens in the Hall of the Gibichungs, on the Rhine. Here he finds Gunther and his sister Gutrune, and their half-brother Hagen, son of Alberich. Hagen, who knows the story of the ring,

wishes to obtain it, and gives Siegfried a magic potion that makes him forget his love for Brunnhilde, and fall in love with Gutrune. Hagen then suggests that in exchange for Gutrune Siegfried shall bring Brunnhilde to be Gunther's bride. Meanwhile Brunnhilde, on her rock, refuses to give up Siegfried's ring to the Valkyrie Waltraute, even to avert the curse that rests on the gods. Siegfried then comes, in the form of Gunther (by virtue of the magic helmet), and, after tearing the ring from her finger, leads her off to his new friend.

In the second act, at the Gibichungs' Hall, Hagen announces the coming marriage of Gunther, and the people rejoice at the event. But when Brunnhilde sees Siegfried wedded to Gutrune and wearing the ring, she is overcome with anger and amazement. She accuses him of treachery, and although he protests his innocence, having forgotten all his previous life because of the potion, she

soon convinces Gunther, and together with Hagen they plan Siegfried's destruction.

In the third act, on the banks of the Rhine, Siegfried has strayed from his comrades while hunting in the forest. The Rhine Daughters appear, and beg him for the ring he wears, but he keeps it in spite of their warning. His companions then find him, and during their halt he tells the story of his life. Hagen now restores his memory with a second potion, and he relates his discovery of Brunnhilde and his marriage to her. At the close of the tale Gunther is overcome with horror, and Hagen stabs Siegfried in the back.

In the next scene, Gutrune is waiting at the castle, and Hagen tells her that Siegfried has been killed by a boar. When the corpse is brought in, he claims the ring, and stabs Gunther, who tries to prevent his taking it. But as he reaches for it, Siegfried's dead hand is raised in warning,

and Hagen sinks back abashed. Brunnhilde, who now knows through the Rhine-daughters that Siegfried's acts were due to the potion, thrusts Gutrune aside and claims for herself the right of a wife's grief. She takes the ring from his finger, and after the vassals have built the funeral pyre she lights it herself, and mounting the horse Grane, she plunges into the flames. The Rhine now overflows, and as Hagen dashes into its waves to recover the ring, he is drawn down into the depths, and the Rhine Daughters regain their gold. Meanwhile, a crimson glow appears in the sky. Walhalla is burning, and the old gods perish, their ill-gotten power yielding before the might of human love.

CHAPTER X.

WAGNER AND HIS MUSIC.

WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER was born in Leipsic, on May 22, 1813. He was the youngest of nine children, and when his father died, a few months later, the widow had a hard struggle to maintain herself and her numerous family. Even her marriage with the court actor Geyer did not place her in luxury, and in 1815 they migrated to Dresden. There Richard received some desultory rudiments of education, but his stepfather, who was a painter as well as an actor, found no trace of artistic talent in the child. In music, too, the little Richard was no prodigy,[1] and it was not until the day

[1] Praeger ("Wagner as I Knew Him," p. 82), in describing Wagner's meeting with Meyerbeer in 1839, mentions

before Geyer's death, in 1821, that his feat of remembering a simple tune of his sister's made the actor inquire, "Has he perhaps a talent for music?" At school, Richard was nothing but a natural, warm-hearted boy, endowed with much animal spirits despite physical weakness, and a decided taste for reading fairy tales.

It was not until 1827 that Wagner began any serious study of music. A hearing of Beethoven's symphonies and Weber's "Freischütz" made the impulsive youth eager to become a composer, and he plunged into a course of study that resulted in a ridiculously exaggerated overture. After this fiasco, he sought a teacher, and six months' work under Weinlig led him to produce a sonata in strict form. This piece, however,

Meyerbeer's surprise at the "rough handling of his piano" when Wagner tried over the "Rienzi" score. Wagner's genius was evidently located in his brain rather than his fingers, and of course could not show itself until he began his studies.

was pedantic and uninspired, though his symphony, written in 1832, is not without some merit.

It was at this time that Wagner turned his attention to opera, and wrote "The Fairies." He was now in actual work as chorus-master in the Würzburg theatre, — not a princely position, but one that enabled him to carry on his studies. A similar post in Magdeburg gave him opportunity to write his "Liebesverbot," the Italian style of this work being due to the great influence exerted on him by the renowned prima donna Schroeder-Devrient, who appeared in the works of Bellini and Donizetti. The Magdeburg company failed, through lack of appreciation on the part of the city's inhabitants, and the ambitious young director got himself still deeper in financial difficulties by marrying the pretty actress Wilhelmina Planer.[1]

[1] Wagner's first wife, Wilhelmina Planer, was a faithful and patient helpmeet to him, and her aid was of the

He then obtained a situation in Königsberg, but the company there failed also. His next position was in Riga, where financial embarrassments still pursued him. Here it was that the constant repetition of operas by Auber, Bellini, and similar writers showed him the thinness and triviality of their music.

In 1839 a change of managers left Wagner again out of employment, and he carried out his long-cherished plan of going to Paris. A preliminary voyage to London gave him the idea of his "Flying Dutchman," and after the completion of "Rienzi," he composed the work in a very few weeks.

utmost value in his early struggles. But her intellect was not of the highest order, and she was unable to understand the true greatness of her husband. Their separation in 1864 drew much adverse criticism upon Wagner, but he was always the first to acknowledge her good qualities, and he did not, as some enemies asserted, leave her in want. She died in 1866, and four years afterward Wagner married Cosima, daughter of Liszt and divorced wife of Von Bülow.

Wagner could make little impression upon the gay capital, despite introductions from Meyerbeer. The help of his faithful and thrifty Minna enabled him to eke out a scanty living by copying and criticism, but it was Dresden, and not Paris, that arranged for the performance of "Rienzi." Wagner's Paris writings of this period show that he had already begun a campaign for national opera, and he was outspoken in praising the native "Masaniello" at the expense of imported Italian compositions.

The success of "Rienzi," on its production at Dresden in 1842, was instant and decisive, and resulted in the acceptance of Wagner's other new work. But while "Rienzi" was an opera, in the old sense of the term, the "Flying Dutchman" was definitely a music-drama, and it failed. To quote Wagner's own words in description of his method,[1]

[1] Wagner's eighth letter to Heine, p. 456, in "Letters to Uhlig, Fischer, and Heine."

"The modern division into Arias, Duets, Finales, and so on, I had at once to give up, and in their stead narrate the Saga in one breath, just as should be done in a good poem. In this wise I brought forth an opera, of which, now that it has been performed, I cannot conceive how it could have pleased. For in its every external feature it is so completely unlike that which one now calls opera, that I see indeed how much I demanded of the public, namely, that they should with one blow dissever themselves from all that which had hitherto entertained and appealed to them in the theatre. . . . In this way may we win for ourselves once more a German School of Original Opera."

What was this wonderful new method? Merely that the characters on the stage, instead of prancing to the footlights and pouring out roulades at the audience, should move, act, and sing in a way that suited the situation, according to the laws of ordinary

common sense. On the dramatic stage, how absurd it would seem for the actors to ignore one another, and recite their lines at the audience as if the occasion were merely an exhibition of declamation instead of a play. Yet that would be an exact analogy to the Italian singing-opera, and even to-day there are many who will sit through such a vocal concert without recognising the fact that the melodies which afford them so much pleasure might be just as well given in a song recital, and that the great possibilities of stage action in union with appropriate music are often utterly wasted in such plays.

The new method, then, consisted in making the drama as natural as possible and freeing it from useless conventionalities, and in allowing the music to follow and emphasize the sense of the words. In Gluck's operas, the music was always faithful to the libretto, but there was still the artificial division into scenas and arias, which delayed

the dramatic action. Wagner did not forbid melody or form, but demanded that they should never interfere with correct stage action.

Although the "Flying Dutchman" was harshly criticised, it contains many beauties that are now recognised and admired. What can be more melodious than the spinning-song, or the bright sailors' choruses? If Senta's ballad is dramatic rather than tuneful, does it not deal with a dramatic subject? Does not the sombre phrase that typifies the Dutchman portray him more correctly than a dozen Italian melodies could? And is not the tender motive of Senta's love more beautiful in its way than the most sugary cavatina? The trouble was not with Wagner, but with the people, who were not yet educated enough to recognise the worth of his music. It is harmony chiefly that portrays emotion,[1] and

[1] As one of the thousand examples that might be chosen to show that the harmony, and not the melody,

the public has finally recognised that Wagner's intuitive perception of the meaning of different harmonies made him one of the world's greatest geniuses.

Dresden now became the scene of the composer's labours, until the political troubles of 1848 and 1849 drove him into exile in Switzerland. In Dresden, "Tannhäuser" was produced in 1845. Despite a growing admiration for Wagner among the cultivated

is responsible for the emotion produced, the writer suggests a comparison of Bach's "Mein Gläubiges Herze" with Jensen's "Murmelndes Lüftchen, Blüthenwind." In these two songs, the opening phrase is the same according to the melody in the voice part, but the harmonies in the first case reflect the direct sincerity of devout rejoicing, while in the second, they portray impassioned love. It can easily be seen that those who do not possess the sense of harmony (and they are numerous enough in many operatic audiences) cannot understand the beauty of works that rely upon varying harmonies for their best effects. Hence the acrimonious contest over Wagner's works. They are, of course, a sealed book to those whose sense of harmony is merely rudimentary, or who cannot properly associate harmony and emotion.

circles, the work met with scarcely more success than its predecessor. "An opera without song," it was called, and critics vied with one another in attacking its lack of melody and restless modulation. Posterity must again reverse their verdict, or rather, approve where they denounced; for harmony is an absolute essential to emotional expression in music, and the lack of form is due to the fact that in opera the music must alter when the meaning of the words alters, and cannot be based on a strict plan like that of a symphony or sonata. To-day "Tannhäuser" seems clear and lucid, and its lack of form is evident only in contrast to the works that preceded it, just as Raphael's figures, for instance, show more freedom and ease than the stiff and unnatural poses found in the earlier Christian mosaics.

There is melody enough in "Tannhäuser," though it is of a more rugged sort than the facile *vocalises* of Italy. No musician can

help being thrilled by the great "Pilgrims' Chorus," and the alluring music of the Venusberg, if for once not in set form, is full of the attractive harmonies that are so wholly lacking in the conventional *Opera Seria.* The climax of the first act, where the gathering knights induce the minstrel to return, the well-known march to the singing contest, Elisabeth's "Greeting to the Hall," Tannhäuser's hymn to Venus, Elisabeth's prayer, and Wolfram's homage to the consecrated heroine, are all definite numbers that can be given as single selections. They do not in any way impede the action, however, but take their places in the movement of the drama as parts of a complete whole. In "Tannhäuser," Wagner gave full evidence of the wonderful skill in instrumentation that has made his works serve as models for students of orchestration.

"Lohengrin," completed in 1848, was an advance over the preceding works. Here



"THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE."
(Wagner Caricature.)

Wagner showed himself entirely free from the conventionalities of the singing-operas, and able to create a powerful drama, moving swiftly and naturally, and emphasised at all points by music that was not only appropriate, but altogether beautiful in its own right. Again the music was pronounced too complex and fantastic (imagine the "Bridal Chorus" being called too complex!), and the performance was put off indefinitely. Here, as before, the trouble lay not with the composer, but with the audiences; for the operatic public is not necessarily musical, and includes a large majority who care more for spectacular display and astonishing vocalism than for depth of thought and excellence of composition. Wagner's rich chords and delicate modulations were a sealed book to all who lacked the sense of harmony, and only in later times has the public grown to see the many beauties in his scores. Apart from any theory of operatic composition, the in-

trinsic value of his music places him on a pedestal far above any other composer for the stage.[1] His works are the only operatic ones deemed worthy of performance in orchestral concerts, without the extraneous aid of librettos or soloists.

A detailed account of the many beauties of "Lohengrin" would be a complete description of the opera. The prelude, built entirely on a theme typical of the Holy Grail, is developed into a marvellous web of sound. Elsa's recital of her dream, and its fulfilment by Lohengrin's arrival, form a

[1] It must not be forgotten, in speaking of any composer, that his opportunities as well as his achievements should be taken into account. Had Mozart, for instance, come after Beethoven and Weber, there can be no doubt that he, too, would have assimilated their work, and produced operas more modern in vein than those he gave the world in the century before Wagner lived. But even Mozart was melodic rather than harmonic, and Wagner has forced the world to admit that harmony is of more value than melody in portraying the emotions depicted on the stage.

climax more stirring than any on the operatic stage. Lohengrin's impressive warning not to ask his name, and the malevolent passion of Ortrud, are typified in phrases that foreshadow all the condensed power of the guiding motives of later operas. The beautiful march to the church is melody as definite as any of the Italian sort, but supported by rich and attractive harmonies instead of the few simple chords of the earlier style. The prelude to the third act, the beautiful love-duet, and Lohengrin's departure, keep up the standard of the work, and show that if Wagner discarded the older methods, he was able to substitute something better in their place.

It was during Wagner's long exile from Germany that he issued the voluminous publications that set forth in definite form all his theories of opera. Briefly stated, they demand that the composer should write a worthy libretto, as already mentioned; that

the music should at all times reflect and intensify the spirit of the words, Wagner's own terse expression being "Music is truth;" that the music should not break the action into separate vocal numbers, which he likened to a string of single pearls, but should form a complete whole. Thus far, his early works accord with his theories, but now he went farther and formulated a more distinct system. To produce the effect of unity, he made use of what he termed "Melos," a sort of endless recitative, which could be made melodic or harmonic, fluent or abrupt, as the situation demanded. When any character or event assumed importance, the musical phrase representing it became definitely typical of it, and could be used to recall it to mind in any later passage. This use of Leit-Motiven, or guiding motives, enabled the orchestra to give a running comment on the action, just as the Greek chorus did in the ancient tragedies; or the music could even

foretell events and express the unspoken thoughts of the characters on the stage. In the later operas, which Wagner himself termed music-dramas, entirely new effects were attained by this method.

Wagner's later works were written in obedience to an inward ideal, for they were planned on such a scale of magnificence that he had small hope of their performance. Meanwhile the published operas met with little encouragement, save at Weimar, where Wagner's one great admirer, Liszt, held sway. In Paris, in 1860, "Tannhäuser" was hooted down by the Jockey Club, because its composer would not defer to their wishes in postponing the ballet so that they could finish their dinners comfortably before it appeared. Vienna at last seemed to awaken to the composer's worth, and applauded "Lohengrin" in 1861, but two years later "Tristan" was abandoned after fifty-four rehearsals, and not produced there for twenty years. Wagner

himself, when he published his Nibelung librettos as a literary work, outlined a plan for their production similar to that realised in Bayreuth fourteen years later, but acknowledged that such an affair would demand the patronage of a prince. "Will this prince be found?" queried the composer.

In 1864 the prince was found. King Ludwig of Bavaria, lost in admiration of the composer's works, sent Adjutant Sauer to seek him. The officer went first to Vienna and then to Switzerland, with no success, but in the latter place he met the song-composer Baron Hornstein, who gave him the desired information. "I know where Wagner is," said Hornstein; "he is at Stuttgart, hiding from his creditors." Such was the case, and the despondent Wagner was ready to purchase a pistol and end his troubles when the timely arrival of the messenger saved him.[1]

[1] This anecdote of Wagner's poverty and enforced flight from Vienna is to be found in vol. ii., p. 122, of

The first result of the intimacy between king and composer was the production of "Tristan." As this opera exemplified all Wagner's theories, so it drew the attacks of all hostile critics. Leaving out such criticisms as arose from malice, we may find everywhere the complaint that melody was lacking. The endless harmonic Melos was too much for its hearers to understand at once, and never was composer more justified than Wagner when he spoke of his productions as the "Music of the Future." Time has shown that a growing perception of harmony has made clear and beautiful what at first seemed jumbled and meaningless. Yet even to-day there are many of Wagner's greatest admirers who think that the harmonic intensity of "Tristan" is excessive,

Henry T. Finck's "Wagner and His Works." That excellent and thorough biography gives much valuable information for the Wagner student concerning the composer's life, writings, and aspirations.

and who grant its beauty, but prefer the more direct charm of "Lohengrin" or "Die Meistersinger." "Tristan," however, will always remain a marvel of logical thematic development, rich harmony, and gorgeous instrumentation. Of the orchestration, the praise of a famous American Wagnerian may well apply not only to "Tristan," but to all the composer's works.[1] "If a painter should discover and use a new spectrum with colours never before seen by mortal eyes, he would do for the sense of sight what Wagner has done in 'Tristan' for the ear. What a marvellous variety of tone-colours, many of them entirely new on the musical palette, has he lavished on this score! Yet all this sensuous beauty is placed entirely in the service of the dramatic emotion which it is intended to intensify." To realise the extraordinary harmonic originality of Wagner,

[1] Henry T. Finck, "Wagner and His Works," vol. ii., p. 149.

attention is drawn to the fact that he outstripped his generation not only once, like Mozart or Monteverde, but twice; just as "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" were ahead of their time, so a still higher level is reached in "Tristan" and the Nibelungen Trilogy.

The old political opposition, combined with newer intrigues, resulted in Wagner's departure for Lucerne, this time with a royal pension. There, among a few friends, and in the company of his much-loved animal pets, he completed the "Mastersingers," for production in Munich. For once critics and public were a unit in praising the many beauties of the new work, which is undoubtedly the greatest and most truly beautiful opera in existence. It represents Wagner's own career to a large extent. Walther, who has learned from old masters, and sings from his heart instead of by petty rules, is Wagner, who was inspired by Beethoven, and who discarded the old conventions for a freer

style. The malicious stupidity of Beckmesser is only too accurate as a portrait of the ignorant hostility that Wagner met throughout his life.

While the "Mastersingers" displays all the dramatic fitness of "Tristan," its Melos is not an over-impassioned mass of turgid harmony, but is literally crowded with passages of the most entrancing melodic beauty. It is an ungracious task to select particular numbers at the expense of others, for every scene and episode demands its share of appreciation. The dainty apprentice music, Pogner's majestic address, Walther's trial-song, the antiphonal debate that follows it, Sachs's summer-night meditations, Beckmesser's serenade, the agitated riot and the belated watchman, the rehearsal of the dream-song, the great quintet that follows it, the magnificent march of the guilds and dance of the apprentices, and the final triumph of the ardent hero, are all replete with a feel-



BAYREUTH OPERA HOUSE.

ing and significance that give the work a perennial fragrance and charm.

Of Wagner's efforts to found a German national theatre, in which not only his new Trilogy, but the best operas of other German composers, could be properly given, this is not the place to speak at length. Munich, which is at present taking steps to possess such a temple of art, declined to have anything to do with the undertaking. Wagner's friend and admirer, Tausig, who strove to carry out the idea, met with an untimely death. Heckel, who planned the formation of Wagner Societies with a view to collect funds, made such slow progress that success seemed impossible. After the building was begun at Bayreuth, the other German theatres declined to give benefits for it, despite the revenue they drew from Wagner's earlier works. The emperor, for all his good wishes, did not grant much financial aid, and even the help of King Ludwig brought the total

available sum to scarcely half the needed amount. But Wagner's indomitable pluck carried the day, and at last, in 1876, the first Bayreuth festival took place.

Again the critics attacked the music, and foretold a speedy failure for the new venture. Again has time proved the utter falsity of all their views and prophecies. The public came gradually to realise, with Liszt, that the Trilogy "overtops and commands our whole art-epoch as Mont Blanc does our other mountains." [1]

The "Rheingold" opens with a wonderful picture of the flowing river, consisting of wavy chord-arpeggios over a sustained bass. In the depths of the water, the Rhine-daughters sing their graceful passages of flowing melody, and intone their bright "Rheingold" cry. Their fluent measures

[1] These words of Liszt were applied by him to the finale of the "Götterdämmerung," but may well be used to describe the Trilogy as a whole.

are disturbed by the rougher tones of Alberich, whose renunciation is full of dramatic power. In the second scene the noble strains of the "Walhalla" music are heard, and with the ponderous tread of the giants are mingled the characteristic phrases of the gods, especially dainty being the motive of Loge's magic fire. In Niffelheim, amid the rhythmic hammer-strokes of the Nibelung forges, the baleful motives of the dwarfs are heard. On the mountain, after the prisoned Alberich utters his declamatory curse on the ring, the Gods march over the rainbow bridge amid strains of eloquent beauty.

In the hands of a lesser composer, the guiding motives might easily become a set of mere musical labels. But Wagner, with his mastery of expressive harmony, has given themes of such deep significance that they rivet themselves at once upon the hearer's attention, and at every recurrence

will remind him of some definite character or event. While the motives of "Tristan" are somewhat arbitrary, and those of the "Meistersinger" are lost in the continuous sparkle of the whole work, in the "Ring" they are eminently successful. The personifications of mythology are always simple, and can be excellently portrayed by single characteristic phrases.

The most popular numbers of "Die Walküre" will always be the mighty "Ride of the Valkyries" and the delicate Magic Fire music. The second act has some powerful passages, especially Siegmund's dramatic scene with Brunnhilde and the stirring spectacle of the duel on the mountain. But the first act is of especial interest to Wagnerians, for here the composer's new method of using Leit-Motiven is employed with admirable effect.[1] The scene, a simple

[1] For a detailed analysis of Wagner's operas and dramas, with reference to the guiding motives, the stu-

evening meal in a forest hut, becomes endowed with intense interest by the masterly interweaving of orchestral figures. For example, when Siegmund is relating his adventures, the Volsung motive forewarns the audience that he will prove to be one of that tribe so hostile to Hunding; and when Siegmund tells of his father's strange disappearance, the Walhalla motive indicates that his father was Wotan, and had returned to his celestial castle. When Siegmund is left alone before the fire, the rapid alternation of his thoughts is clearly reflected in the orchestra. The threatening measures of the Hunding motive suggest themselves at once; then, as Siegmund utters his despairing cry for the promised sword, the motive of Wotan's compact is heard, with the shimmering sword-music as the firelight flashes on the hilt hidden in the tree; but the bright

dent is referred to "Wagner's Life and Works," by Gustav Kobbé.

glow reminds him only of Sieglinde, and the motive of sympathy, first heard when she soothed the weary stranger, indicates the new course of his thoughts. These are but a few of the many truly dramatic effects attained by the use of guiding motives.

"Siegfried" suffers a little by having fewer characters than the two preceding works, but it still contains many passages of entrancing beauty. The recapitulation given in the conundrums of Mime and Wotan serves to introduce nearly all the guiding motives from the two preceding dramas. The welding of the sword leads to an exciting musical climax. The third act is one long, impassioned love-duet, and affords great scope for dramatic singers. The undoubted gem of the work, however, is the "Waldesweben," or forest-music, in Act II., in which the murmuring sounds of the forest, with its calling of birds and

rustling of leaves, are reproduced in delicate orchestral phrases that are interwoven to form a musical texture of the richest colouring.

The music of the "Götterdämmerung" hurries the auditor along from one incident to another, and is replete with significant motives and poetic fervour. According to Saint-Saëns, "It triples the intensity of the feelings with which the characters are animated." Every scene and every note has its own meaning. The gloomy music of the Norns, the great duet of farewell between Siegfried and Brunnhilde, and the well-wrought Rhine journey are all thoroughly effective. So, too, is the chorus of homage to Gunther, and the many dramatic passages in the Hall of the Gibichungs. But undoubtedly the greatest single act in all Wagner's works is the closing one of the Trilogy, for here is found the delicious trio of the Rhine-maidens, the wonderful funeral march of

Siegfried (in which the story of the hero's life is told again in tones), and the dramatic climax of Brunnhilde's tragic fate. The final scene is one of unequalled breadth and power, and it forms a worthy and majestic close of the great music-epic, the grandest operatic achievement in the annals of the stage.

"Parsifal" is given only at Bayreuth, where it has become a sort of memorial service to the composer. In this work, as in the "Meistersinger" and "Lohengrin," Wagner avoided the continual monologue that renders "Tristan" and "Siegfried" somewhat tedious at times, and introduced many ensemble and choral numbers. The first and last acts especially partake of the nature of grand communion services, and the sensuous beauty of the second act forms an excellent contrast to the others. The "Good Friday" music of the last act has now become well known upon the concert stage.

Of Wagner's later life there is little more

that need detain the student of opera, although it is refreshing to note that the master's last years were passed in comfort and luxury. The labour and strain of producing "Parsifal" told on the composer severely, and in 1882 he travelled to Italy for rest, only to die there in the next year. He met his end in the Palazzo Vendramini, at Venice, on February 13, 1883, and his body was taken back to Bayreuth for burial.

Of his music enough has been said to show its general character, but the best way to understand Wagner's music is to hear it performed. It speaks for itself. It compels the admiration of the auditor by its intense sincerity and passionate emotion. One may well apply to the music the description that Hubert Herkomer, who painted Wagner's portrait, gives of the man. After comparing his personal fascination to that of Napoleon I., he adds: "You lose your identity when in his presence; you are sadly inclined to forget

that there is something else in the world besides Wagner and his music. You are under an influence that sets every nerve at its highest key. He has been able to make people frantic with enthusiasm." [1]

Critics have said that there can be no Wagner school. In the strict sense of the word, there is none, for Wagner was one of those transcendent geniuses that are found but seldom in the world, and not more than once or twice in the history of an art or a country. But as far as actual influence goes, the whole world to-day is one huge Wagner school. In the orchestral field, his marvellous instrumentation serves as the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. The Bohemian Dvorak has borrowed his richness of colouring, and the German Richard Strauss has applied to the symphony his harmonic complexity.[2] In

[1] Portfolio, 1880; quoted also by Henry T. Finck.

[2] The modern tendency of symphonic composers toward musical impressionism is in definite opposition to

opera the later Germans are striving to apply his emotion-painting to their national folk-legends, while the Italians have been led perforce into the harmonic style that alone can reflect the feelings inspired by a drama, and even the mercurial Paris possesses its quota of rabid Wagnerian imitators. Most decidedly the Music of the Future has become that of the present.

Wagner's ideas. He admired Beethoven and the classical masters, and adopted a harmonic style because he thought it best fitted for opera. He makes a distinct statement that this style is intended for the stage, and not for the concert room.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ITALIAN REVIVAL.

In the same year that Wagner saw the light, Giuseppe Verdi was born.[1] His parents were innkeepers in the little hamlet of Roncole, near Busseto, and there the child showed his inborn taste for music by the delight with which he listened to the strains of the itinerant player Bagasset. At the age of seven, while assisting as choir-boy in the neighbouring church, he became so absorbed in listening to the organ that the priest's request for the water remained unheeded until the youngster was aroused from his dream

[1] The controversy regarding Verdi's birth is now settled. Pougin, in his life of Verdi (p. 5), quotes the birth registry to prove that it took place on Oct. 10, 1813.



VERDI.

by a push that sent him rolling down the three steps of the altar. Touched by the boy's evident love of music, a benevolent tradesman, Cavaletti, repaired an old spinet for his use, and on this simple instrument he began his musical career.

After some lessons from the local organist, he was given a small position in the warehouse of Baretti, at Busseto, and encouraged by his master and the kindly musician Provesi to pursue his studies diligently. In 1832, at the age of nineteen, he set out for Milan to enter the conservatory, but the pedantic Basily, who ruled the institution, was unable to judge of Verdi's genius, and refused him admission. Verdi did some excellent work under Lavigna, however, and soon had his revenge on his former judge.

It happened that in the competition for an organist's post, none of the twenty-eight aspirants was able to write a correct fugue on the subject given by Basily. When he

complained to Lavigna, the latter wagered that Verdi could do it. The young student, who was sitting near by, at once took pen and paper and soon finished the composition. Basily read the production with astonishment, and was forced to compliment Verdi on his skill. "But how is it that you have written a double canon on my subject?" queried the master. "Because I found it rather poor, and wished to embellish it," was Verdi's instant reply.

From Milan Verdi returned to Busseto to become town organist, and while there he married the daughter of his benefactor Barezzi. After three years, he returned again to Milan, to begin his operatic career. His first work, "Oberto di San Bonifacio," met with great success at the Scala theatre, and he was entrusted with other librettos. It was while composing the comic opera "Un Giorno di Regno" that he fell ill, and his short domestic happiness was ended by the

death of his wife and his two children. It is no wonder that under these circumstances he was not in proper condition to write a comic opera, and the work proved a failure. After this he attempted nothing more in lighter vein until "Falstaff."

Verdi was so saddened that he wished to give up his musical career, but the persuasive schemes of the manager Merelli soon made him resume his life-work. In quick succession he produced many operas, of the old Italian singing-style, to be sure, but all showing the boldness and virility of the master. Milan, Naples, Florence, Venice, and even Paris and London became the scenes of his labours. To this early period belong "Nabucco," "I Lombardi," "Ernani," "I Due Foscari," "Giovanna d'Arco," "Macbeth," "I Masnadieri," "Luisa Miller," and several others. Of these "Ernani" has stood the test of time best. Its attractive libretto, based on Victor Hugo's play, and

its many brilliant melodies, won great glory in the country of florid vocalism and in the epoch when music did not need to indicate the meaning of the words.

Verdi soon made a distinct advance in style, a gain in dramatic force. Though he still clung to the melodic school of Italy, he showed an easy fluency instead of the elaborate ornamentation of earlier times, and he began to display some sense of dramatic fitness in his music. "Rigoletto," the first of a trio of immense popular successes, in the new vein, was produced in Venice in 1851. Based on a plot taken from "Le Roi s'Amuse," it was adapted to Italian surroundings.

Rigoletto, the jester, has aided the Duke of Mantua in his attentions to Monterone's daughter, and the courtiers, to avenge Monterone, steal Rigoletto's daughter, Gilda, and bring her to the duke, whom she loves. The enraged jester hires an assassin, who lures

the duke to a lonely house, but the bravo's sister Maddalena begs the handsome stranger's life, and he consents to spare the duke if another victim can be found to replace him. Rigoletto, to cure his daughter of her love, brings her to witness the duke's attentions to Maddalena; but when Gilda learns of the duke's danger, she demands admittance to save him. The assassin stabs her, and gives Rigoletto the body wrapped in a sack, which he opens just in time to receive Gilda's last blessing.

The music contains many effective passages, such as Rigoletto's fury at the trick of the courtiers, Gilda's love song ("Caro Nome"), and the duke's famous aria, "La Donna e Mobile." But of far greater musical interest than these is the quartette of the vengeful Rigoletto, the betrayed Gilda, the fickle duke, and the flattered Maddalena. In this piece Verdi combines the most diverse emotions into a powerful ensemble, and even

to-day it is a model of concerted writing. It was the first revelation of the real genius that enabled Verdi to outgrow the errors of his country and his time, and become one of the world's few great composers.

"Il Trovatore," first produced at Rome in 1853, reaches the climax of sensation in its libretto. The wicked Count di Luna tries to win the hand of Leonora, despite her love for the troubadour Manrico. He besieges the lovers in their castle, imprisons Manrico with his supposed mother, the gipsy Azucena, and threatens to kill them unless Leonora yields her hand to him. To save Manrico's life, she does this, but takes poison rather than carry out the agreement. She is sent to tell Manrico, but he declines liberty at such a price, and after Leonora dies he is executed before the eyes of Azucena. The gipsy then calmly informs the count that Manrico is not her son, but his own long-lost brother, who has been stolen during infancy.

In return for this interesting item, the count condemns her to be burned to death.

The music is often distressingly simple and tawdry, but in spite of that quality it possesses such direct melodic and dramatic force that the opera deserves far more praise than the critics are willing to accord to a work of the purely tuneful school that inspires our street organs. Despite its weak plot, it has the strength of a musical setting excellent in design and workmanship, though written as if in words of one syllable to please a public that was wholly childlike in its emotions and impulses. The count's great bass aria ("Il Balen"), the bright "Anvil Chorus" of the gipsies, Manrico's spirited aria ("Di Quella Pira"), his tender duet with Azucena, the great "Miserere," and the effective prison scene, are not made of the stuff that is found in "Lohengrin" or "William Tell;" but they are wholly good and appropriate in their own fluent way, and even the classi-

cist must acknowledge their direct melodic charm.

In 1855 Venice witnessed the performance of "La Traviata," a work that is of distinctly less value than its two predecessors. Founded on Dumas's "Camille," its plot deals with the frail Violetta's deep and sincere admiration for Alfredo, who attends a gay party at her house; their quiet period of love in a rustic cottage; her self-abnegation in leaving Alfredo free at his father's desire; Alfredo's resentment at her supposed faithlessness when he meets her at a Paris ball; and his remorse when he learns the truth and finds her dying.

This work is essentially a singing-opera, of the florid school, and has little to recommend it. Violetta's well-known aria of awakening love, "Ah, Fors' e Lui," is followed by a series of vocal pyrotechnics in which she makes spasmodic efforts to stifle her new passion. She has a dramatic duet with Alfredo's

father, after which that gentleman, in the famous aria, "Di Provenza Il Mar," tries to charm his son back to the comforts of home. But Alfredo is not in a mood to listen to such trivial melody, and rushes off to Paris to hear his beloved Violetta give an exhibition of her masterly vocal technique while in the last stages of consumption. In the Venetian *première*, Donatelli, who took the heroine's part, was endowed by nature with more than her share of avoirdupois, and when she described herself as a victim of phthisis, the situation became so absurd that the audience burst into laughter.

"Un Ballo in Maschera," the "Masked Ball," is of interest to Americans, as its scene was finally located in old Boston. The spectacle of a colonial governor carrying on an intrigue with his secretary's wife, and being stabbed for it at a masked ball, is a decided novelty in the history of the Puritan commonwealth. The conspiracy scene of the original

version ("Gustavo III.") was forbidden after Orsini's attempt on the life of Napoleon III., and hence the change. But the Italian patriots still shouted "Viva Verdi," for the five letters of his name stood in their eyes for "Vittorio Emmanuele, Re d' Italia." Verdi's connection with politics was thus a much more fortunate one than Wagner's.

Meantime the works and doctrines of the German master began to penetrate Italy. The younger musicians took up the new school with avidity, and declaimed against the thin musical trifles of the day, but Verdi himself kept well abreast of the times, and the new generation soon found that he could excel them in a field they had chosen especially for themselves. Already in "Don Carlos," and "La Forza del Destino," he showed signs of musical regeneration, and when the Khedive of Egypt, in 1869, commissioned him to write a national opera for that country, he responded by producing a

masterpiece upon an immensely higher plane of musical worth than he had ever reached before. "Aida," for that was its name, won for Verdi the recognition of cultivated musical circles in Germany and elsewhere, just as "Trovatore" gained him the plaudits of the general public.

The scene of the work is laid in ancient Egypt. Aida, daughter of the Ethiopian king, is a hostage at the Egyptian court, where she and the young warrior Rhadames have fallen in love with each other. Rhadames is sent off to the war, and during his absence the Princess Amneris, who loves him, discovers Aida's attachment. Rhadames returns, covered with glory, and bringing many prisoners. The king releases all except Amonasro, father of Aida, and bestows the hand of Amneris upon the unwilling Rhadames in reward for his victory. Later on, beside the river Nile, Amonasro forces Aida to use her influence over Rhadames and

persuade him to join their cause, but the plan is overheard by the jealous Amneris, who denounces the trio. Rhadames is tried and condemned, refuses a pardon that would force him to accept the hand of Amneris, and is buried alive in a vault, under the temple, where Aida manages to conceal herself and die with him.

The music of "Aida" possesses dignity, power, and majesty, and its many melodious passages are altogether different from the meaningless trivialities of Verdi's earlier works. Its various numbers are no longer irrelevant displays of vocalism, but always give an accurate reflection of the plot and situation. Rhadames's great romanza, "Celeste Aida," strikes a note of beauty at the very outset. Aida's lament, "Ritorna Vincitor," has more true dramatic force than the entire school of singing-operas can boast. The consecration of the arms in the temple is a powerful episode, and allows Verdi to use

two actual Egyptian tunes. Aida's spirited duet with Amneris sustains the standard of the work, while the stirring scene of Rhadames's triumphant return always arouses the utmost enthusiasm. Aida's lovely romanza, "O Cieli Azzuri," is not unworthy of the magic beauty of the Nile, and the dramatic passages that follow it lead up to a scene of great power. The last act is something of an anticlimax, but the judgment of Rhadames is impressive enough, and the finale, where the duet of the doomed lovers mingles with the strains of the priestesses in the temple, is a worthy close to a truly great tragedy.

Rossini wrote nothing new after his "William Tell." In similar fashion, Verdi was for many years content to rest on his laurels, and let "Aida" remain his master work, but at last rumours of a new opera by him reached the public, and in 1887 "Otello" was given to the world at Milan. The

libretto, a condensation of Shakespeare's play into four acts, is a most excellent example of the poetic skill and taste of Arrigo Boïto. In two places he has introduced passages not found in the original, but even Shakespearians admit their beauty and appropriateness. One is the delightful chain of choruses where the Cyprus fishermen bring their gifts to Desdemona, in the second act, and the other is Iago's fierce "Credo," a powerful soliloquy showing all the "motiveless malignity" of his character. For the rest, the text follows its great original closely. Othello arrives at Cyprus in the storm, and Iago and Rodrigo at once scheme for Cassio's ruin. After Desdemona receives the fishermen's gifts, Iago awakens Othello's jealousy; Desdemona's intercession for Cassio strengthens her husband's suspicions of her; and Iago's continued duplicity confirms them. At last Othello smothers her, and kills himself on learning of her innocence.

Verdi disclaimed Wagner's influence; yet although he used no definite *leit-motiven*, he was compelled to follow the German master in continuity of music, in choice of good librettos, and in dramatic unity of music and words. "Otello," like "Aida," is thus a complete artistic whole, and not one of the old-style stage concerts. It was in "Otello" that Verdi reached his full command of the subtle power of characterisation, by which a phrase or a guiding motive, consisting of a few simple chords, may be made to contain a world of meaning.

The play opens with the graphic storm music, and after Othello's dignified entrance, "honest Iago" begins his blandishments, which give way to a beautiful love duet with Desdemona. In the next act comes Iago's "Credo," after which Othello's ingenuousness makes him fall an easy prey to the duplicity of the schemer; here, too, are his noble farewell to glory, Iago's great description

of jealousy ("E un Idra Fosca"), and Othello's wild cry for vengeance. Othello's irony to Desdemona, in the third act, is capitally expressed, and although her passionate pleading almost melts him, he remains disconsolate in grief. The famous "Handkerchief Trio," which dispels the blank misery for a moment, is a bright bit of real musical skill, while Iago's contemptuous "Ecco il Leone," when Othello is prostrate and heedless of the shouts of acclamation outside, brings the scene to a powerful close. In the last act the pathetic "Willow" song, the beautiful "Ave Maria," the passionate farewell of Desdemona to Emilia, and her eloquent pleading with Othello, keep up the high standard of the music.

Six years later, at Milan, came "Falstaff," another of Boïto's admirable Shakespearian arrangements. The libretto is taken from "The Merry Wives of Windsor," with the addition of Falstaff's sarcastic monologue on

honour from "Henry IV." As in the play, Falstaff sends his letter to Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, and would fall a victim to the clever detective work of Master Ford, but for the kindly assistance of the buck-basket. He is then beguiled to Herne's oak, where he receives a thorough beating from the masqueraders, after which all is explained happily, Ford and his wife are reconciled, and "Sweet Anne" is betrothed to Fenton.

The music is a triumph of exquisite vivacity combined with the most consummate skill. Though written by a man eighty years old, it seems to breathe the spirit of youth in every bar. Despite the most complicated part writing, it flows on in the most natural manner, not excepting the elaborate concerted passages. Even to those who knew Verdi well, the music came as a revelation. Its best lyric numbers are the "Honour" soliloquy, a delightful female quartet *a capella* when Falstaff's letters are received, a spirited

male quartet abusing him, the ironical invitation given him by Dame Quickly, his attempt to bribe Ford, his well-orchestrated exit in the buck-basket, Fenton's love song and Nanetta's solo in the last act, the delicious fairy music around the oak, and a final fugue that is a marvel of contrapuntal dexterity. The rollicking humour of the work, its flashing wit, its moments of expressive tenderness, and its continual flow of high spirits, give it an indescribable charm, and its exhilarating measures have had scarcely any parallel since the days of Mozart's best operas. This was Verdi's last work, as he died in 1900.

Boïto (1842–) is a man whose claim to renown has long rested upon a single work. It is now certain that his new opera "Nero" will be produced at an early date, but "Mefistofele," given to the world in the season of 1867–68, has been his only production thus far, despite his constant studies and his ar-

rangement of Verdi's last two librettos. The exact value of "Mefistofele" is rather hard to determine; for it contains much excellent music, but is composite in style, and despite an attractive plot is of inordinate length. The original version was even more prolix than the present form, and its first performance resulted in a free fight between Boïto's partisans and the wearied mortals who composed the rest of the audience.[1]

The libretto is based on Goethe's drama of "Faust." The opera begins with a prologue in heaven, consisting of a prelude and a mystic chorus, an instrumental scherzo, a dramatic interlude in which Mephistopheles engages to entrap Faust, a chorus of cherubim, and the final psalmody of the penitent spirits. All is wonderfully impressive, the heavenly choirs singing passages of magnificent power, against the background of clouds, while weird trumpet calls and im-

[1] See Streatfeild, "Masters of Italian Music," p. 250.

pressive flourishes are heard in the orchestra.

The first act opens on a square in Frankfort, amid choruses of students, townsmen, hunters, and peasants. After the elector passes, Faust and his disciple enter, and Mephistopheles, in the form of a gray friar, soon espies them. The scene changes to Faust's laboratory, where, after a beautiful solo, his reading of the Bible compels the friar to expose himself, in the sonorous aria "Son lo Spirito." Mephistopheles offers Faust all the pleasures of earth in exchange for his soul, and the compact is made.

The second act opens in Marguerite's garden, and is a series of bright duets, depicting the love of herself and Faust, and the sarcastic admiration of Mephistopheles for Martha. These lead to a dainty quartette of farewell, after which the scene changes to the Brocken. There the witches are holding their revels, and the wild, unearthly power

of the music gives an impressive picture of their frenzied merriment.

In the third act, the deserted Marguerite is found in prison because of her murder of her babe. The music gives an excellent echo to her sad longings and her insane moans for mercy. Faust urges her to fly with him, but after a duet of the utmost tenderness and pathos, she sinks back in death, while the celestial chorus announces her salvation.

The fourth act shows the "Classical Sabbath," and on the banks of the Peneus Faust pays court to Helen of Troy, amid the stately temples and flower-crowned statues of ancient Greece. After the opening love-duet, Helen gives a powerful description of the fall of Troy, but, with this exception, the music is entirely devoted to amatory passages in the fluent melodic style of Italy.

An epilogue shows Faust in his laboratory. He is no longer satisfied with mere pleasure, and prays for pardon. Mephistopheles tempts

him again, but the heavenly choirs of the prologue interrupt the demon. In despair, Mephisto calls his sirens to lure Faust with all their beauty, but Faust seizes the Bible, and prays again for help. After he dies, a shower of roses falls upon his body, and the finale of the prologue is repeated to portray his salvation.

Despite the composite style of Boïto's music, there can be no doubt of its value to Italy. He was the pioneer in many things that were new and good, and not alone Verdi, but even Mascagni, was forced to follow his lead in adopting the modern vein of polyphonic composition.

Petrella (1813–77), Apolloni (1822–89), and Carlos Gomez (born in Brazil in 1839, his great success, "Il Guarany," being given in 1870) modelled their style upon the forcible melodies of Verdi's earlier works. Marchetti, in his "Ruy Blas," achieved a gentler vein. Ponchielli (1834–

86) had the advantage of hearing "Aida" and "Mefistofele," and his own chief opera, "La Gioconda," contains much that is dramatic and powerful, especially in the concerted passages. Its libretto, which foreshadows the sensational crudities of the newer Italian melodramas, deals with the love of the Venetian street singer, La Gioconda, for the fickle Enzo. She buys his liberty from the spy Barnaba, only to discover that he is carrying on an intrigue with another woman. After generously saving Enzo and his mistress from the latter's husband, she kills herself. The score of this coarse plot is made up of much rather commonplace tunefulness, some excellent ballet music, and many examples of the composer's fondness for fanciful melodic designs.

In 1890, Mascagni drew the attention of the public upon himself by winning the Sonzogno prize with his one-act opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana." The libretto, founded on

one of Verga's Sicilian tales, is a simple, if not actually crude, story of rustic honour. Santuzza, the heroine, is betrayed by Turiddu. She appeals to him, but in vain, for he is now smitten with his former flame, Lola, at present the wife of the carter Alfio. Santuzza, in revenge, reveals the intrigue to Alfio, who promises to avenge both her and himself. During the festivities after church service, he picks a quarrel with Turiddu, and kills him.

"Rustic Chivalry" was the first of the short melodramas of modern Italy to reach America, and its immense success is not hard to explain. It has unity, simplicity, and quick motion; but more than this, its music is endowed with the strength of sincerity and dramatic fervour, and its richly orchestrated melodies have won unlimited favour with the public. Turiddu's "Siciliana" (sung as part of the overture before the curtain rises), the broadly written "Re-

gina Coeli" of the church service, Lola's serenely confident aria, "My King of Roses," and the jolly "Brindisi" would have sufficed to float any opera in popularity, even without the aid of the saccharine "Intermezzo." Although Mascagni hardly claims rank as a first-class composer, the power and vividness of this work ensure it a favourable reception whenever it appears on the stage.

Mascagni's later operas have not won any great success. "L'Ami Fritz" is too gentle a subject for his sensational style. "I Rantzau," "Ratcliff," "Iris," and "Silvano" are hardly known outside of Italy, and "Il Maschere," his latest work, in which a pair of faithful lovers are aided by the maskers that are so typical of Italian cities, is an example of his musical mediocrity. One critic calls it most distressingly incoherent and illogical as a musical whole, while another relates that, after many of its passages had suggested "Cavalleria" and

"Iris," a reminiscence of Puccini's "Bohême" made the audience shout, "Ah! Puccini; viva Puccini!"[1]

Mascagni was followed by Leoncavallo, an older man, who imitated the new style in "I Pagliacci." The Pagliacci are a troupe of strolling players such as are well known in Italy. Tonio, the clown, loves Nedda, the Columbine. He overhears her scheming to elope with the villager Silvio, and in jealous rage denounces her to her husband Canio. Silvio escapes unrecognised, and Nedda will not reveal his name. In the second act the Pagliacci perform to a rustic audience a play representing their own situation exactly. Columbine (Nedda) entertains her lover, while the clown (Tonio) watches for her husband (Canio). When the latter returns, the mimic tragedy becomes real. Canio demands the name of her lover, which she still refuses. Nedda, finding herself in actual danger, calls

[1] See the *Musical Courier* for Feb. 13, 1901.

Silvio from the audience to aid her. He rushes forward, but Canio stabs Nedda, and then kills him, crying out, "La commedia e finita."

The music of this play, though less directly popular than that of "Rustic Chivalry," shows far more skill. Leoncavallo frankly adopts Wagner's ideas, and the well-knit plot is set in a way that is always coherent, intensely dramatic, and faithful to the words. The composer is not entirely successful in finding melodious phrases, as his more ambitious "Medici" will show, but time may give him a better command of expression. His "Zaza" met with a favourable reception, despite its unattractive subject, and his new opera, "Rolando," is awaited with interest. Yet even Leoncavallo is rated as only fairly prominent, and the intelligent Italian critics accord him a much lower rank than that of Puccini, whom Verdi named as his probable successor.

Giacomo Puccini was born at Lucca in 1858. Descended from a long line of musicians, he was endowed with great natural gifts, and received a thorough training. His first work, "Le Villi," produced in 1884, was in reality the origin of the short operas that are now so popular. It deals with the Northern legend of the Wilis, or spirits of affianced damsels whose lovers have proved unfaithful. The play opens with the betrothal of Robert and Anna, in a Black Forest village. Robert departs for Mayence, where he has fallen heir to an inheritance. While there he yields to the charms of a courtesan, and Anna dies brokenhearted. The second act opens with her funeral, and after a time the remorseful Robert returns, only to be drawn into the circling dance of the ghostly Wilis and whirled about until he drops lifeless.

"Edgar," brought out five years later, did not prove such a success as "Le Villi."

Its music was scarcely inferior to that of the earlier work, but it was hampered by a tedious libretto. It has for its heroine a gipsy who beguiles the hero to her mountain retreat. He soons tires of her, and hurries off to the battle-field. Returning in the disguise of a friar, he renounces the gipsy and her charms, and tries to find happiness in the arms of a village maiden who has loved him from the first. The vengeful gipsy, however, contrives to stab her rival, who dies in the hero's embrace while the crowd drag the murderess to the scaffold. The score contains beautiful melodies and passages of rich orchestration, but in many places it is laboured and ineffective.

After several years of retirement, Puccini again came into public notice with his "Manon Lescaut." Founded on Abbé Prévost's well-known romance, it does not make a very coherent drama, but seems rather a succession of single scenes. In the first act,

the beautiful but frivolous Manon meets the ardent Des Grieux and elopes with him, abandoning her plan of entering a convent. In the second act she has left him for the wealthy Geronte de Lavoir. Des Grieux manages to enter her apartment, and after reproaching her impetuously, persuades her to fly with him. But they are prevented by Manon's irate protector, who summons the police and consigns her to St. Lazare. The third act takes place at Havre, and shows the embarkation of the *filles de joie* for America, while the last act, which occurs in America, is one long duet between the lovers, and ends with Manon's death.

The music to "Manon Lescaut" is mature in style, and shows that Puccini had gained command of his powers. If it is open to the charge of being too heavy-handed for the sprightly passages of the first two acts, the dramatic strength of the third makes ample amends. Des Grieux and Manon's

father are watching under the windows of her prison, and the lovers exchange passionate vows of constancy. Morning dawns, and the poor women are led out one by one, to be greeted with jeers or sympathy according to the varying mood of the gathering crowd. Des Grieux and Manon bid farewell in a dramatic duet, to which murmurs of the people and the monotonous roll-call of the sergeant form an effective undertone. As the vessel is ready to depart, Des Grieux breaks in with one last appeal, and is allowed to accompany Manon to America. It would perhaps have been better for the drama if the sergeant had ordered him back, for thus he would have prevented the tedious duet of the fourth act, which forms a decided anti-climax.

"La Bohême" (1897) is founded on Murger's novel, "Vie de Bohême." As in the book, Marcel the painter, Colline the philosopher, Rudolph the poet, and Schaunard the

musician, form an inseparable quartet. In their little attic of the Latin Quarter, they live, love, and work together, burning their manuscripts when fuel fails, and putting off their landlord with the utmost joviality. Here the gentle Mimi is rescued from cold and sickness, loving and being loved by the emotional poet. In the Café Momus (Act II.) the piquant Musetta, despite her coquetry with other admirers, returns to the faithful Marcel. The inevitable quarrels (Act III.) lead to separations, and the forsaken Mimi is at last brought back by Musetta (Act IV.) only to die in Rudolph's arms.

As in "Manon," the libretto is a series of genre pictures rather than a single drama. The music is full of life and dash, and it has also many touches of marked sweetness and grace. It possesses the sensational vigour of style that characterises Italy to-day, but the episodical nature of the words makes the interest cease at times. Rudolph's duet with

Mimi in the first act is melodious enough, and the bright music of the street scene before the café is made of excellent material, but the third act is altogether hazy. The last act contains the rollicking antics of the four Bohemians, in which they bid defiance to poverty and hunger, while the finale is touching in its strong simplicity. The characters are not deeply interesting, and it is not until Mimi's death that the earnest sympathy of her comrades gives the one touch of nature that makes the audience feel any real interest in the work.

In "Tosca" (1900), a subject taken from Sardou's drama, Puccini had a stronger libretto, and the power and mastery of his style shone forth in their true light. The first act shows the interior of the Church of St. Andrew at Rome. Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, appears, and after a search finds the key to his sister's private chapel, which he enters. The old sacristan now

comes in, closely followed by the artist Mario, who has been painting a likeness of Angelotti's sister while at her prayers. Angelotti discovers himself to Mario, but is interrupted by the arrival of the impulsive Tosca, who loves the handsome young artist. Her suspicions on hearing a noise, and her jealousy on seeing Mario at work on another's picture, are at last allayed, and after a charming love scene she departs. Angelotti reappears, when a sudden cannon-shot from the fortress outside warns him of the discovery of his escape, and Mario leads him out to a hiding-place. The sacristan returns, followed by a crowd, and announces a Te Deum in honour of Napoleon's defeat, when suddenly all are silenced by the appearance of Baron Scarpia, chief of police. He finds the fan of Angelotti's sister, also Mario's food-basket in her chapel, and guesses the truth. He arouses Tosca's jealousy with the fan, and sets his agents to follow her while the service begins.

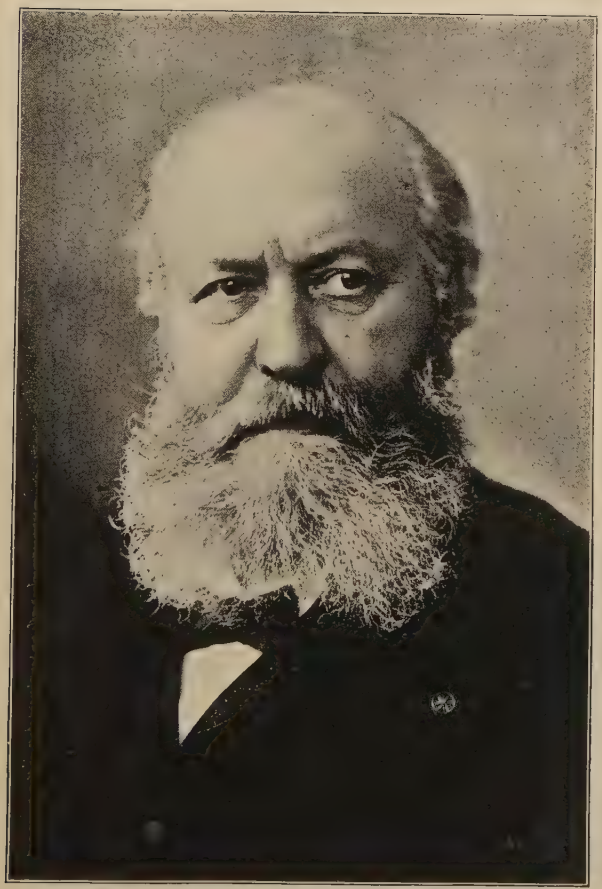
The second act shows the unscrupulous Scarpia at supper in his room in the Farnese palace. His agents bring news that they have followed Tosca, and captured Mario, but not Angelotti. Mario denies all knowledge of Angelotti, and, when he sees Tosca, who has been singing in a festival cantata below, he warns her to keep silent. Scarpia then puts Mario to torture, and forces Tosca to save him by revealing Angelotti's hiding-place. Mario is now amenable for treason. After he is led away, Tosca asks the venal Scarpia what price he will accept for Mario's safety, and finds that she must sacrifice her own honour to him. After vain prayers and bitter anguish, she consents, first demanding a safe-conduct for Mario and herself. Scarpia arranges a pretended execution for Mario. While he is writing the safe-conduct, Tosca conceals the knife she finds on the supper-table, and kills him with it when he approaches her.

The third act, on a platform of the castle of San Angelo, is the scene of the execution. Mario is ready for death, when Tosca enters with the safe-conduct and the news that his executioners are to shoot with blank cartridges, according to Scarpia's promise. But Scarpia's treacherous nature shows its effects even after his death, and, instead of escaping, Mario falls a victim to real bullets. When Tosca discovers this, she becomes frantic with grief. Meanwhile, Scarpia's fate has been discovered, and Tosca, to escape his underlings, kills herself by jumping from the battlements.

The music to this opera is strong, graphic, and full of dramatic effects. Best of all, its style is marked by true originality. If "Manon Lescaut" reminds some critics of certain passages in "Tristan," there is not the slightest trace of imitation in "Tosca," if we except the fact that the old sacristan is greeted by the acolytes in about the same

way that David was teased by the apprentices in the "Meistersinger." The dialogues of the first act move with refreshing speed and directness. Scarpia dominates the stage in an effective manner, and his words of command merge into a church service that forms a truly magnificent climax. The strains of the festal cantata, which float in through the window during Mario's examination, are a masterly touch of realism. If the torture episode is almost too strong for stage uses, it is still handled with evident skill, and Tosca's scene with Scarpia is set in a manner fully worthy of the intensely dramatic actions and words. The shepherd's call and the distant bells add a life-like touch to the third act, while the double climax of Mario's execution and Tosca's death brings the work to a powerful close. This opera is by far the best production that has come from Italy since Verdi's death, and its instant success was thoroughly well deserved.

Among the younger Italian composers of the day are mentioned Spinelli, Giordano, Tasca, Coronaro, and Cilea. But none of these has yet had time to achieve anything of permanent value, so Puccini is to-day the pride and hope of Italy. His music is free from the meretricious tricks of Mascagni, and infinitely more powerful than the somewhat aimless discords of Leoncavallo. Like his contemporaries, Puccini sounds a note of deep earnestness that augurs well for Italy's musical future, and, if certain lighter touches are as yet lacking in his work, he must still receive full meed of praise for what he has already accomplished.



GOUNOD.

CHAPTER XII.

MODERN FRANCE.

THE successor of Meyerbeer, in popularity, as well as in point of time, was Charles Gounod (1818–93). He came at a period when French opera was at the zenith of its development, and before the influence of Wagner began to overshadow the French horizon. While Italy was listening to Verdi's youthful inanities, and Germany seemed half disposed to shelve Wagner's early works in favour of such a man as Offenbach, Paris had witnessed the success of "Masaniello," "William Tell," "Robert the Devil," and "The Huguenots."

Gounod's taste for music was aroused by three distinct events, which made such a pow-

erful impression on him that they determined his life-work. The first was a performance of "Der Freischütz" in 1825. Even in the atrocious arrangement given it by Castil-Blaze, it produced a deep impression upon the susceptible child. Six years later, Malibran's singing in Rossini's "Otello" won the sincere worship of the ardent boy. But it was not until he heard "Don Giovanni," in 1832, that he was irresistibly drawn into a musical career. "If they had attempted to prevent me from learning music," he said afterward, "I should have run away to America and hidden in some corner where I could have studied undisturbed." [1]

But he did not have to proceed to such lengths, and New York and Boston were compelled to do without an operatic genius. After completing his classical curriculum, in

[1] De Bovet, "Charles Gounod," p. 54. De Bovet's work gives a good account of Gounod's character and his ideas on music.

1836, he entered the Conservatoire, where he studied counterpoint with Halevy, and composition with Lesueur and Paer. Rome was the scene of his later studies, despite his failure to obtain the Grand Prix. Vienna, too, saw something of him before he returned to his native heath.

In 1851, owing to the kind offices of Pauline Viardot, Gounod produced his first opera, "Sapho," but it met with little more than a *succès d'estime*. Three years later, "La Nonne Sanglante," based on "The Monk" of Lewis, failed because of its puerile libretto. But if these two, with the vocal numbers of "Ulysses," are now laid aside, his next work, "Faust" (1859), won him immortal fame.

The libretto, though founded on Goethe's drama, deals almost wholly with the "Gretchen" episode. Faust is first seen in his laboratory, tired of earth's vanity and his burden of age, and ready to take poison. His decision is altered by the happy strains

of the villagers outside, but melancholy soon regains its sway. In despair, he summons the spirit of evil, who offers him all pleasure in exchange for his soul, and shows him a vision of Marguerite. Moved by the sight, Faust consents to the bargain, and on drinking a magic draught is endowed with youth and beauty.

Mephistopheles then takes him to a kermesse, where he meets Marguerite. In her garden, after her boyish admirer Siebel has left a floral offering for her, Mephisto places by it a casket of jewels that causes her to forget the simpler gift. He and Faust find her adorned with them, and Mephisto pays mock attentions to the duenna Martha while Faust pleads his love with Marguerite.

After Mephisto has beguiled Faust away, the betrayed Marguerite is left alone, shunned by her companions and haunted by remorse. Her soldier-brother, Valentine, returning from the wars, is treacherously killed by Mephisto, and gives Marguerite his dying



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MELBA

as Marguerite in "Faust."

curse. She is driven insane with grief, and murders her babe. Faust finds her in prison, and urges her to fly with him, but she remains there, only to die. Mephisto claims her, but the appearance of the angels symbolises her pardon.

The music to "Faust" is a perennial delight to its auditors, whether cultivated or untrained. Gounod was no musical Titan, no master-mind to lead the way into unexplored realms of beauty, and because of this many an aspiring neophyte feels at liberty to deride him. But his delicate feeling and emotion are inimitable, and his exquisite sensibility makes him *par excellence* a master in the musical treatment of sentiment. If the opera is in some degree a set of scenes rather than a coherent drama, this fact is lost sight of in face of the ineffable beauty with which many of the scenes are treated.

The snatches of chorus in the first act are delightfully interwoven with Faust's gloomy

soliloquy. The duet with Mephisto is dramatic enough, and the vision of Marguerite is set with admirable delicacy. The bright choruses of the kermesse are attractive in their way, and if the popular exorcism of Mephistopheles is a bit of rather cheap sentiment, it still produces its effect. The well-known air of Siebel ("Parlatello d'Amor") is always charming, and the "King of Thule" and jewel song of Marguerite are touching enough, though rather thin. The duets in the garden are certainly composed of linked sweetness, if a trifle long-drawn-out. Marguerite's penitence in the church introduces a sacred style that adds variety to the music, and the soldiers' chorus, if lacking the dignity of that in "Aida," is sure of a warm reception. The final act is short, but the grand trio for Faust, Marguerite and Mephistopheles is one of the truly great numbers of the work.[1]

[1] A French statistician has discovered that "Faust" has been the inspiration of more composers than the slight

"Philemon et Baucis" is sometimes given in France, but seldom elsewhere. "La Colombe" was not of any great consequence. "La Reine de Saba" (1862) did not fulfil the expectations with which it was awaited. "Mireille" (1864), founded on the lovely Provençal idyl of Mistral, was made of far more interesting material, and is full of direct freshness in spite of Gounod's idealistic tendencies. Mireille is the daughter of a rich

popularity of the works would lead one to believe. The operas written on the subject are by Prince Radziwill (1814), Joseph Strauss (1814), George Licki (Vienna, 1815), Ignace-Xavier de Seyfried (Vienna, 1820), Bishop (London, 1825), Charles Eberwein (1825), Beancourt (Paris, 1827), Louise Bertin (Paris, 1834), Lindpaintner (Stuttgart, 1832), Peelert (Brussels, 1834), Jules Reitz (Dusseldorf, 1836), Conradin Kreutzer (1836), Gordigiani (Florence, 1837), Joseph Gregoir (Antwerp, 1847), Henry Cohen (Paris, 1847), Hugh Pierson (England, 1850), Charles Gounod (Paris, 1859), Arrigo Boïto (Milan, 1868), Lassen (Weimar, 1876). To these must be added Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust" (1846), Schumann's symphonic work (1853), and Liszt's "Faust" symphony (1857). Overtures were composed by Richard Wagner (1849), Hilber (1839), and Chretien Schultz (1800–10).

farmer named Raymond, who objects to her lover Vincent and prefers the herdsman Ourrías. On a pilgrimage to a church in the desert of Crau, Mireille has a sunstroke, and in remorse her father promises to revoke his dismissal of Vincent, whereupon she speedily recovers and is united to her lover. Though the music has not quite the vivid richness of Bizet's "Arlésienne," it still possesses much warmth of colouring, the shepherd's song in the third act being especially tinged with the fragrance of meadow flowers.

"Romeo and Juliet" (1869), Gounod's last opera, ranks next to "Faust." As in Shakespeare's play, the young lovers meet and fall in love at Capulet's ball, continue in that agreeable condition during the balcony scene, and are at length secretly married by Friar Laurence. Romeo then kills the fiery Tybalt, is banished, and says farewell to his bride. She refuses the hand of Count Paris, her father's choice, and takes the friar's sleeping-

potion, which renders her insensible before she can be forced to marry the count. In the tomb, Romeo finds her body, and takes poison, while she stabs herself after awakening to witness his death.

Of the many operas on this subject, Gounod's is the best, but it is not essentially great. Most popular are Juliet's showy waltz-arietta at the ball, Mercutio's "Queen Mab" song, the duet of the balcony scene, Friar Laurence's impressive solo ("Al Vostro Amor Cocente"), a strong trio and quartet that follow it, the parting of the lovers, and the tragic passages in the tomb. Gounod's delightful sweetness and profound melancholy are often in evidence, but the music as a whole has little continuity, and the interest centres on single numbers or on the beauties of the plot.

Georges Bizet (1838–75) possessed a rugged vigour and directness that were in decided contrast to the lyrical tendencies of

the modern French composers. Looking back on his short and unfortunate life, the student can only regret that he received so little appreciation and met with such an early death. At thirty-seven Verdi had not yet produced "Trovatore," Wagner was in exile and "Lohengrin" unappreciated, and Gluck had hardly begun to drop the meaningless Italian style. Had Bizet lived beyond that age, he would surely have given an excellent account of himself.

Passing over the operetta, "Docteur Miracle" (1857), "Vasco da Gama" (1863) was his first large work. "Les Pecheurs de Perles" and "Djamileh" were attractive examples of Oriental colouring, and "La Jolie Fille de Perth" also met with some encouragement. "L'Arlésienne," already alluded to, was not an opera, but a set of detached numbers, like Gounod's "Ulysses." Bizet's great work, the one on which he centred all his hopes, the one whose cold recep-



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CALVÉ

as Carmen in "Carmen."

tion by the venal critics undoubtedly hastened his death, was "Carmen," produced in 1875, with a libretto founded upon Merimée's famous novel.

The action begins on the public square of Seville, where Don José, a young officer, is captivated by the fascinating gipsy Carmen, one of the cigar girls from a neighbouring factory. Michaela, an innocent village maiden who loves Don José, brings him a message from his mother, and for a time dispels his sudden fancy. Meanwhile, Carmen, in a quarrel, stabs a comrade, and is arrested for it; but she so bewitches Don José that he aids her to escape from his own soldiers. In Lillas-Pastia's inn (Act II.) she meets and charms Escamillo, the toreador; but she afterward dances for Don José, accepts him as her lover, persuades him to desert, and takes him to a band of smugglers. In their mountain retreat (Act III.) Carmen grows indifferent to Don José, and the thought of

Escamillo arouses his jealousy. He cannot remain with her, however, for Michaela appears with the news that his mother is dying, and drags him away. He returns to Seville, where he finds the fickle Carmen about to enter the arena in which the toreador is fighting. He tries to reawaken her love, but she responds with insults and abuse, and the enraged lover stabs her, just as Escamillo appears.

Such a fiery plot gave the composer strong situations, effective contrasts, and excellent chances for local colouring. Bizet took full advantage of them, and did not merely produce a popular opera with a few interesting numbers, but invested the entire work with the charm of lively and appropriate music. Among the single selections, the resplendent "Toreador" solo receives the first tribute of public admiration. The "Habanera" and "Seguedilla," of the first act, are also sure of a warm reception. But the more musical

auditor finds many other beauties to admire in the work. The dainty quintet of the smugglers, the interweaving of the trumpet-recall with Carmen's dance, and the baleful phrase that expresses her evil influence over Don José, show far more skill and taste on the composer's part than a dozen brilliant solos would have done. Michaela's few passages, if hardly as definite as a *leit-motif*, are endowed with great beauty, and speak well for the composer's power of characterisation. Strength, originality, and rhythmic grace pervade the work, and if its broad effects were not at first fully understood in its native country of elegance and refinement, foreign nations have formed a truer estimate of its worth, and given it a more enthusiastic reception.

Charles Ambroise Thomas (1811–96) began his career by imitating Auber and Halevy. Of the baker's dozen of operas that he produced before the appearance of Gou-

nod, the most successful were "Le Songe d'un Nuit d'Été," "Raymond," and "Psyche." Under the influence of the great sentimentalist, Thomas altered his style, and in "Mignon" (1866) he gave the world a work of rare simplicity and charm.

The plot of "Mignon" is drawn from Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." Mignon, stolen and brought up by gipsies, is sought by her father, who disguises himself as a harper. She is rescued from her hard position by the travelling student Wilhelm Meister, who thus wins her adoration. At a castle fête, however, Wilhelm falls a victim to the charms of the actress Filina. Mignon, in despair, is about to drown herself, but the harper, Lothario, saves her. Sympathising with her childish jealousy, the half-crazed Lothario sets fire to the castle, and nearly causes the death of Mignon, who is rescued by Wilhelm. The latter then takes her and Lothario to Italy, where he forgets the fas-

cinations of Filina. Near Lothario's castle, the disguised harper discovers that Mignon is his daughter, and Wilhelm is now ready to return her love and marry her.

The music to "Mignon" is graceful rather than powerful, but it is always fresh and natural, and free from the excessive richness of many modern French operas. The choruses of the opening scene are full of brightness, Mignon's song of her dimly well-remembered Italy (Goethe's "Kennst Du das Land") is of rare charm, her "Styrienne" ("Conosco un Zingarello") has a direct pathos that won tremendous applause at the *première*, while Filina's dashing polacca ("Io son Titania") and the dainty gavotte for alto aid in imparting success to the work. This is the composer's most important opera, for "Hamlet," so much praised by Frenchmen, is a ludicrous perversion of Shakespeare's tragedy, and "Françoise de Rimini" did not reach a very high level.

Massenet is reckoned as an imitator of Wagner, but his saccharine measures do not possess the rugged strength shown in the works of the Bayreuth master. "Le Roi de Lahore" (1877) follows Gounod rather than Wagner, though its subtle beauties of orchestration already showed the hand of the master. The splendid tableau of the Indian paradise in the third act may have something to do with the success of the work. "Herodiade" (1881) is a much more effective opera, and in it Massenet showed that he understood thoroughly the proper use of guiding motives.

"Manon" (1884) is probably the work in which Massenet achieved his greatest success. In the libretto, which differs from Puccini's later version, Manon meets and elopes with Des Grieux, but when the latter writes for his father's consent to his marriage with the girl, he is waylaid, before posting the letter, by De Bretigny, who, with the aid of Manon's

cousin, wishes to win her love. De Bretigny succeeds, and places her in luxury, but she leaves her new-found comfort to rescue Des Grieux from his proposed seclusion in a convent. The young lovers are now forced to live by gambling, and are soon in trouble. The debts of Des Grieux are paid by his father, but Manon falls a victim to the law, and is sentenced to exile. Des Grieux follows to rescue her; she is utterly exhausted however, and dies in his arms.

Massenet's setting lacks the earnest power of Puccini's, but the lighter parts are decidedly more successful in the French work. The score contains many dainty solo passages, and effective concerted numbers, and the climaxes are skilfully arranged. There is a note of genuine passion, too, but the general effect is one of delicacy and sweetness.

"Le Cid" and "Le Mage" were not great

successes, though produced at the Paris opera-house. "Esclarmonde," based on a romance of Byzantine chivalry, is marked by an elaborate use of guiding themes, but despite its frank imitation of Wagner, it contains enough of Massenet's sensuous beauty of style to make it distinctively his own. "Werther," on a plot taken from Goethe's novel, unites the thematic elaboration of "Esclarmonde" with the grace of "Manon."

"La Navarraise" (1894) was a new departure for the composer, — nothing less than an attempt to imitate the short Italian melodramas. The scene is laid in Spain during a civil war. Anita, a poor Navarraise peasant, loves Araquil, a Spanish sergeant, but her poverty stands in her way. When a price is set on the Carlist leader's head, she enters his camp, kills him, and wins the reward. On her return, Araquil, brought in wounded, thinks her new wealth has been purchased by

her honour, and forswears her. He dies before he can can learn the truth, and Anita goes crazy.

The score of this work reaches the climax of musical sensation. Drums, rifles, and cannon become a part of the orchestra, and the noise of the battle would make Meyerbeer's "Bartholomew Massacre" hide its diminished head. The libretto is of more value than the music, and the success of the piece rests chiefly upon the dramatic power of the heroine.

Camille Saint-Saëns has not met with great favour on the operatic stage, though his dramatic works contain beauties of a high order. "Samson and Dalila" (1877) won many plaudits in Germany, but took some time in finding its way to Paris. The Biblical story forms its plot. In the first act, Samson leads the Israelites to victory over the Philistines. The second act brings him to Dalila, who learns the secret of his strength

and betrays him into the hands of his enemies. After a scene that shows him blind, chained, and grinding a mill, the third act portrays the festival of his captors, and ends with his destruction of the temple of Dagon. The first act is in oratorio style, the second, passionate and richly coloured, while the last is tinged with the Oriental flavour so characteristic of the composer.

"Etienne Marcel" and "Proserpina" were failures, but "Henry VIII." (1883) met with a success that renders it popular even to-day. The piece begins with Henry's adoration for Anne Boleyn, who drops her former lover, the ambassador Don Gomez, for Henry's sake. Henry tries to obtain from the Pope a divorce from Catherine, and on the Pope's refusal declares the Church of England independent. After Anne becomes queen, Don Gomez tells of a compromising letter written by her, which is in Catherine's possession. But Catherine, with true nobility, will not

betray her successor, and burns the note just before her own death.

"Ascanio" met with little success, and "Phryne" is nothing but an *opéra comique* of the old style, despite its beautiful music. Saint-Saëns is not essentially dramatic in style, and has no definite operatic theories, in spite of his copious use of guiding motives.

Delibes was another successful worker in the field of orchestral richness and warm colouring. "Le Roi l'a Dit" and "Sylvia" were well received, but his one great work was "Lakmé," produced in 1879. It is another example of the Oriental school of plots, and is located in India. Gerald, an English officer, is loved by Lakmê, daughter of a priest, who possesses all the native hatred of foreigners. After the irate father has learned of his daughter's passion for a stranger, he makes her sing in the market-place, and thus discovers and stabs her lover. Lakmé manages to conceal the

wounded man in her luxurious native retreat, and nurses him in the hope of keeping his love. But duty at last recalls him to civilisation and his English fiancée, while Lakmé poisons herself.

The music of "Lakmé" is extremely rich and sweet, though perhaps too monotonous. Among its best numbers are a Hindoo chorus, Lakmé's duet with her slave, Gerald's love song, the priest's aria in the second act, Lakmé's well-known bell song, Gerald's recognition of her, and her crooning slumber song when he is recovering under her care. The dance music is an example of the composer's best style; in fact he seems to excel in all his ballets.

With Delibes, in the lighter school, may be classed Ernest Guiraud, who wrote the dainty comic opera "Piccolino;" Ferdinand Poise, who set many of Molière's plays; Edouard Lalo, whose "Roi d'Ys" is rather gloomy for an *opéra comique* although very

powerful; and Benjamin Godard, whose "Vivandière" displays much brilliant gaiety and true feeling in treating a simple love-story of the Vendée insurrection.

The most modern movement in France has been even more distinctly Wagnerian in character than the merely formal adoption of guiding motives by Saint-Saëns and Massenet. Musical reactions, or changes in taste, are apt to set in after a certain definite period of time, when the original style of one period has grown to be a matter of course to a later generation. In France, the suave simplicity of Gounod and his followers has evidently become so familiar that the later composers are seeking new effects in the realm of dissonance and complexity.

Ernest Reyer, one of the oldest of the living French composers, stands on the border line between the two camps of professed Wagnerians. Born in 1823, he won the ap-

proval of musicians while still fairly young, but did not gain the ear of the public until much later. Beginning as a reformer, and writing music that was criticised as too advanced, he has lived to find himself classed among the reactionaries. In his earlier work, he imitated the Orientalism of David, and the complex instrumentation of Berlioz, but later on he became an ardent champion and follower of Wagner. His "Erostrate" was given by Berlioz, and "La Statue" received high praise from Bizet. But it was not until the production of "Sigurd," in 1884, that he came into his heritage of popular appreciation.

The story of "Sigurd" is almost exactly that of Wagner's "Götterdämmerung," though the two works were planned independently, Reyer's libretto being finished in 1853. Sigurd is Siegfried, and loves Gunther's sister Hilda, who has given him a magic potion. To win her, he journeys to

Iceland with Gunther and Hagen, and, by use of the Tarnhelm, assumes Gunther's form to win Brunehild for him. Afterward Hilda, in a fit of jealousy, discloses the secret, whereupon Brunehild releases Sigurd from the spell of the potion. He recognises Brunehild as the bride ordained for him by the gods, but is treacherously slain by Hagen, while Brunehild, through a mystic sympathy, dies from the stroke that killed her lover.

The music shows knowledge, imagination, and some feeling for characterisation. The orchestral writing is brilliant and vigorous, and the declamatory passages effective, but there are still traces of an affection for conventional rhythm, and many of the songs are detachable enough to belong to an older style of opera. Reyer seems unable or unwilling to carry out his theories completely in practice, and the result is that his music lacks individuality.

"Salammbô" (1890) succeeds because of its gorgeous scenic effects. The plot is taken from Flaubert's powerful romance of old Carthage, and deserves stronger treatment than that of the imitative Reyer. Salammbô is the daughter of Hamilcar, and is loved by the warrior Matho, although betrothed by her father to another. Matho leads a revolt of the mercenaries, who have not received their pay, and steals the sacred veil of Tanit, the patron goddess of the city. Salammbô, in an effort to recover it, penetrates to the tent of Matho, where she succeeds in her object. In the ensuing battle, Matho is captured, and when he is brought before Hamilcar, Salammbô stabs herself, whereupon the prisoner bursts his bonds, and performs a similar operation upon his own body.

After the first act has ushered in the drama in the gardens of Hamilcar, the second shows the temple of Tanit, where Matho declares his love for Salammbô before

appropriating the consecrated article of celestial apparel. The third act includes the council of war and Salammbô's preparations on her private terrace, but does not advance the plot much. The camp scene of the fourth act is effective, though unnecessary, and it is not until the maiden reaches Matho's tent that the lovers are able to express their feelings with any freedom. A battle scene follows, after which the fifth act closes the drama in the Carthaginian Forum. Reyer has included some guiding motives in his score, but its melodies are rather characterless, save in the love-duet, and even that is less sincere than the similar number in "Les Huguenots." The harmonic scheme lacks variety at times, the choruses are overpowering rather than skilful, and the orchestration is noisy but not beautiful. Altogether, the work shows less musicianship than Reyer's earlier efforts.

With Reyer may be classed Salvayre

(1847–), whose "Dame de Monsoreau" places him in the Wagnerian category. Chabrier (1842–94) began his career with the delightfully spirited *opéra comique* "Le Roi Malgré Lui," but in 1886 he showed himself a devoted disciple of the Bayreuth principles, and brought out the strong but unequal "Gwendoline." César Franck (1822–90), by birth a Belgian, belongs to the concert-room rather than the stage, but his mastery of the modern polyphonic style makes his "Hulda" suggest at once the harmonic wealth of "Tristan." Hulda is captured by Vikings, and forced to wed their leader. She persuades Eyolf, whom she loves, to kill the chief and take her away. After a time Eyolf proves faithless to her, whereupon she kills him and casts herself into the sea.

Charpentier, in his "Louise," has exploited the idea of using his orchestra to impart local atmosphere rather than emotional variety.

There is nothing so intensely original in this, for did not Wagner, the first great orchestral painter, do the same thing, and do it grandly? The steady flow of the Rhine, the rhythmic beat of the Nibelung forges, the whinnying of the Valkyries' horses, and the gentle murmurs of the forest, are as definite tone-pictures as Charpentier's reproduction of the hawkers' cries and musette tunes of the Paris streets. Charpentier confines himself wholly to this scene-painting, and does not attempt to reproduce in music the emotions of the characters in "Louise," which is an opera of socialism. The atmosphere is perfectly given, but excess of realism is not the sole, nor even the highest, function of music in opera. Just as a novel suffers by being wholly composed of description, so an operatic score will fulfil only part of its mission if it reflects merely the scene and ignores the action.

Of the younger men, Vincent d'Indy (1851–) has shown himself abreast of the

times, and his "Fervaal," with a libretto of "rhythmic prose," is a worthy example of the school of operatic realism and musical complexity. Georges Hué has recently won an unheralded success with his "Roi de Paris," a powerful work dealing with the intrigues of the famous Duc de Guise. But the most prominent composer for the Paris stage at present is Alfred Bruneau. Born in 1857, he studied in the Conservatoire, and had the benefit of Massenet's tuition. His first work, "Kérim," passed almost unnoticed, but in "Le Réve" (1891), on a libretto from Zola's novel, he began the career that has won him his present position.

Its heroine is the dreamy Angelique, adopted child of two aged embroiderers, who live in a French cathedral town. She falls in love with the Bishop's son, who is designing the stained-glass windows, but the Bishop will not give his consent to the marriage. Angelique pines away, until finally the Bishop

relents, and the wedding takes place; but in the porch of the cathedral the bride dies from excess of happiness. The music follows the Wagnerian lead in continuity, in the use of guiding themes, and in the absence of choruses or ensemble passages, but Bruneau lacks Wagner's gift of melodic and harmonic beauty and rich orchestral colouring. Despite these defects, the music speaks with an accent of truth and sincerity that is sure to win attention.

"L'Attaque du Moulin," another adaptation of Zola, deals with the more dramatic subject of the Franco-Prussian war. Françoise, daughter of a French miller, is being betrothed to Dominique, a young Fleming, when the festivities are interrupted by the news of the war and the conscription of all fighting men. When the armies reach the scene, Dominique aids in defending the mill, but the effort is unsuccessful, and Dominique, who is captured, is sentenced to death for

fighting with the French forces. By the help of Françoise, he kills a sentinel and escapes, but the German captain, suspecting the plan, orders the old miller to be shot in Dominique's place. The latter secretly returns, but the miller sacrifices himself by pretending that his sentence is revoked, and he is shot just as Dominique rushes in at the head of some French forces to rescue him.

Bruneau's austere harmony is hardly in place in this opera, where all should be activity and bustle. His efforts to invest the work with a popular flavour, by the introduction of duets, solos, and so forth, are rather conventional. If its realism is of a higher literary character than that of "Rustic Chivalry," its music is distinctly below the Italian melodramas in graphic effects.

"Messidor" possesses a prose libretto, which is not entirely effective on the stage, in spite of Zola's masterly writing. The scene is laid on the banks of the gold-bearing

river Ariège, whose waters, according to tradition, bring the precious metal from a mysterious golden cathedral where the Christ-child scatters the yellow grains in play. None have seen the place, and if mortal eye should behold it, it would be destroyed. Guillaume, the hero of the opera, journeys wearily home through the neglected fields. To the house comes Gaspard, owner of the large gold-washing plant, seeking a cooling drink for his daughter Helène. Guillaume brings this, and earns the reproaches of his mother Véronique, who thinks Gaspard responsible for the accident that caused her husband's death. Guillaume, whose love for Helène outweighs his mother's suspicions, asks the girl for her hand, but she puts him off, fearing she is sought merely for her money. In despair, Guillaume heads a band of unruly villagers, including the dare-devil Mathias, in an attempt to coerce Gaspard by threatening to destroy his machines. Meanwhile

Véronique has found the golden cathedral and seen its celestial inmates, and a tempest arises that overthrows Gaspard's entire building. The last act shows the fields once more cultivated and the earth new-clad in verdure. Guillaume and Helène are free to love each other, for Mathias, not Gaspard, proves to be the murderer of Guillaume's father. The villagers no longer strive after untold riches, but live at peace with one another and pass their days in honest labour.

The music to this allegorical plot, though considered meaningless by many critics, is still full of rich harmonic effects. At times it is almost symphonic in character, though it possesses many bits of melody, and shows the vividness of dialogue that is so typical of its composer. It is free from the excessive harshness evident at times in Bruneau's earlier works, and its portrayal of emotions by guiding motives is masterly.

"L'Ouragan," with another libretto by

Zola, won a decided success in the Paris season of 1901, and its authors showed still further activity by starting on the composition of "L'Enfant Roi." The exact worth of Bruneau's later operas is hard to determine, but the amount of discussion these works have aroused proves that they merit attention at least. Of those who blame, Pougin speaks with most authority; but Pougin is an admirer of Verdi, and can scarcely conceal his longing for the tinsel glories of the Italian singing-operas. Among Bruneau's supporters the name of Charpentier is certainly sufficient to inspire confidence. Bruneau himself, as shown in his books as well as his operas, is a man of wide knowledge and deep sincerity, — evidently one whose future career will be worth watching.

CHAPTER XIII.

GERMANY AND RUSSIA.

If the influence of Wagner was potent enough to exert a marked effect on the styles of Italy and France, its power in Germany can hardly be overestimated. For a time it seemed as if all lesser composers were entirely obliterated, and even now the country has hardly recovered from the unproductiveness that always follows the work of one master mind.

But there has been some activity, despite the artistic domination of Bayreuth. As in France, the opera has proceeded in two definite directions. One path has led to the employment of elaborate orchestral resources to produce effects of direct charm, while the

other has led to the uttermost regions of modern polyphony and dissonance. Among those who employ the former style are Cornelius, Goetz, Humperdinck, and Goldmark, and their work corresponds in a general way to that of Saint-Saëns and Massenet, though the French composers usually displayed sensuous beauty rather than the depth of feeling that characterises the German musicians. Among the more radical group, corresponding to Bruneau, D'Indy, and Franck, the most daring work has been done by Richard Strauss, who, as already mentioned, transferred boldly to the symphonic stage the methods of impressionistic emotion-painting.

Peter Cornelius (1824–74) was born at Mainz, where he received a training for the stage, but failed on his first appearance and decided to begin a musical career. After eight years of study, he joined the band of young Weimar artists who were aiding Liszt in his efforts to carry out Wagner's ideas.

There his "Barber of Bagdad" was composed and performed, appearing in 1858, before any of the music-dramas had reached the world.

The plot of the "Barber" is long-drawn-out, and rather childish. Noureddin loves Margiana, the daughter of the Cadi, and is bidden to an interview with her. He takes along the loquacious and rather ill-balanced barber, Abul Hassan, who watches in the street. Hearing a chance outcry, the barber imagines that Noureddin is being attacked, whereupon he summons aid and invades the house. To escape the Cadi's wrath, Noureddin hides in a chest. The noise and tumult end by bringing the Caliph upon the scene, and the half-smothered Noureddin is discovered, to be presented with Margiana's hand after he has recovered his breath and his composure.

If the story is weak, the music makes ample amends, for it is endowed with extraordinary strength and beauty. It is

marked by rare feeling and taste, combined with a remarkable skill in humourous orchestration, and if certain passages are light or trivial, the lovely interlude of the Muezzin call and the excited confusion of the finale will stand comparison with Wagner's best scenes. It may not be too much to say that the inimitable gaiety of the "Barber" was not without its influence on "Die Meistersinger." "Der Cid," a grand opera by Cornelius, and "Gunlöd," a posthumous work, show less originality, and are little more than copies of Wagner's latest style.

Hermann Goetz (1840–76) met his death while still in the prime of life, and would undoubtedly have won many laurels had he lived longer. His one great work, "Der Widerspänstigen Zähmung," is based upon the "Taming of the Shrew." Lucentio, serenading Bianca, is stopped by a riot among Baptista's servants, who revolt against Katharine's ill-treatment. After they are quieted,

Lucentio resumes his occupation, only to be interrupted again, this time by his rival Hortensio, who is ready with a second serenade. Baptista, disturbed by the quarrelsome suitors, declares that Bianca shall not wed until Katharine is married. Petruchio now appears, and Hortensio's description of Katharine decides him to win her for his own. In the second act, Katharine is found venting her temper upon her sister. The two suitors, disguised as music-master and language-teacher, come in for a share of her anger, after which Petruchio woos Katharine and their wedding-day is set. The third act shows their marriage, and the fourth brings the actual taming of the unruly Katharine, exactly as in Shakespeare's play.

Goetz's music is replete with bright, sympathetic gaiety, and shows the most decided originality and resource. He made no especial use of guiding motives, but his themes and their development display the most

thorough musicianship. Of unusual skill are the choruses, where elaborate part-writing is allied to the utmost tunefulness and jollity. The orchestration is rich and fanciful, and altogether the work as a whole is of a remarkably high standard of artistic worth.

Karl Goldmark (1832–) is preëminently a master of rich harmony and warm orchestral colouring. He studied violin and harmony in the Vienna Conservatory, but owes more to his own work than to the tuition of the school. His first opera, "The Queen of Sheba" (Vienna, 1875), met with a favourable reception. It is effective and brilliant, and shows much originality, in spite of some evident imitation of Wagner's methods. Its plot deals with the infatuation of the Jewish warrior, Assad, for the Queen of Sheba, whose charms have enslaved him in spite of his approaching marriage to Sulamith, daughter of the High Priest. Sulamith

is ready to forgive him, but his passion for the queen proves too powerful, and even at the altar he leaves his bride for the royal embraces. Finally he is banished to the desert, where he is buried by a sand-storm. The music shows much local colour and brilliant orchestration, but has been criticised as lacking an indefinable something in the way of sincerity.

"Merlin," an opera dealing with the Arthurian legend of Merlin and Vivien, was another subject endowed with the supernatural glamour of mythical times. Its score, however, shows too plainly the overpowering influence exerted by the later music-dramas, and it did not meet with a tithe of the popular favour accorded to its predecessor.

"Heimchen am Herd," his latest work, is an example of the style of emotional simplicity revived by Humperdinck in his "Hänsel and Gretel." It is based on Dickens's

"Cricket on the Hearth," with a few changes rendered more or less necessary by its adaptation for the stage. It is in three acts, and follows the story with tolerable fidelity. John Peerybingle, who has been blessed with the utmost domestic happiness, brings home an apparently aged stranger. The newcomer, who is the sweetheart of the orphan May, returned from his wanderings, confides his identity to John's wife, and John, seeing them together, is roused to jealousy by old Tackleton, who, as it happens, wishes to marry May himself. John is calmed by a dream, which takes place in summer instead of winter, and permits the introduction of an elfin dance in the rose-garden, besides the familiar and consoling chirp of the cricket. Finally the stranger, whose identity has remained unsuspected despite his fresh young tenor voice and his many minute descriptions of his travels, surprises the community by revealing himself and marrying his love just

as Tackleton's wedding preparations are completed.

Goldmark has been eminently successful in putting off the impassioned style of his earlier works, and adopting the vein of simple pathos and direct charm. As far as form is concerned, "Das Heimchen am Herd" is a definite echo of the earlier musical method of Lortzing and his compeers. There is no system of guiding motives, no attempt at the continuity of a music-drama, but the many solos, ensembles, duets, and choruses are full of a natural freshness and beauty that cannot be too highly praised. The combination of melodic simplicity and richness of orchestral support produces results that meet with unbounded success in the musical atmosphere of Germany. Among the many attractive numbers, perhaps the best are the popular acclamation of John's arrival with the mail, May's reverie over her past love, Edward's greeting to his native

village, John's dream in the second act, with the delicate elfin music and cricket's chirp, the lively prelude to the third act, and the bright marriage choruses that form its opening scene.

Engelbert Humperdinck, who was the first composer of the present to abandon the grandiose manner for the more sympathetic and less formal atmosphere of folk-lore operas, was born at Siegberg in 1845. After studying at Paderborn, Cologne, Munich, and Rome, he aided in the first production of "Parsifal." A short period at Barcelona was spent in reorganising the local conservatory, after which he was called to Cologne, where he taught theory and directed chorus classes. His one opera was the result of the family custom of writing fairy plays for festivals, the words being the work of his sister, Frau Adelheid Wette, while the music came from his own pen.

"Hänsel and Gretel" is based upon one

of Grimm's fairy tales. The poor broom-maker Peter has gone to town to sell his wares. During his absence, his two children, Hänsel and Gretel, are caught in a romp over their work by their stepmother Gertrude, and sent into the woods to pick berries. Peter returns, cheered by a good trip, but his jollity is banished when he learns where the youngsters have gone, for the wood is inhabited by a witch who eats little children. Meanwhile the children lose their way, and, when overcome by weariness, say their prayers to the guardian angels, who descend from heaven to watch over them. Next morning the witch captures the two wanderers, but they tumble her into her own magic oven, bake her into gingerbread, and release all the children previously enchanted.

The music, with its charming tunefulness and rich scoring, took the world completely by storm. Its direct style produces an

effect not unlike that of Weber's folk-song operas, with the added beauty of all the modern tone-colouring. The forest scene, where the children say their prayers in simple faith, and the fourteen angels do actually descend from heaven to guard their slumbers, is one of ineffable beauty. This work began the German reaction against excessive length in operas, just as "Rustic Chivalry" did in Italy; but it is of a far purer school than the coarse intrigues of Lola in "Cavalleria," or the vengeful jealousy of Canio in "Pagliacci." So far, Goldmark has been the only one to make an attempt in the same vein, but the success of the new departure makes it probable that many more works of the sort will soon appear.

Cyrill Kistler was at one time spoken of as the probable successor of Wagner, but his "Kunihild" (1883) met with little more than a passing approval, and is now rated as

merely a clever imitation of the Wagnerian manner. "Eulenspiegel," founded upon Kotzebue's comedy, shows more originality, and is marked by genuine humour combined with remarkable technical mastery. Max Schillings, one of the younger generation, has won some success with "Ingwelde," but that, too, is little more than a faithful reproduction of Wagner's methods. Richard Strauss has written the one-act opera "Feuersnoth," of some merit and much complexity, while August Bungert has adopted the serial idea, and produced a Hexalogy on the Iliad and Odyssey. This lengthy lucubration consists of "Achilles," "Clytemnestra," "Kirke," "Nausicaa," "Odysseus Heimkehr," and "Odysseus Tod." Several of the single works have been successfully given, "Nausicaa" being the most recent in point of performance.

The first and chief operatic composer of the Bohemian school was Smetana (1824–

84). Of his many operas, "Zwei Wittwen" and "Der Kuss," have met with much success in his native land, and "Dalibor" and "Libusa" are stirring pictures of Bohemian history, but the work by which he is best known is "Die Verkaufte Braut." Its simple plot deals with the love of Jenik for Marenka, daughter of the rich farmer Krusina. Kezal, a matrimonial agent, wins the avaricious old man's consent to a marriage between his daughter and Vasek, son of Micha. When Marenka objects, Kezal tries to buy Jenik off. The latter stipulates that the agreement shall read that Marenka is to marry the son of Micha, and after it is signed he carries off the bride with the announcement that he is a long-lost son of Micha by an early marriage. The music to this eventful story is thoroughly national in colour, but is composed with such skill and taste that it charms cosmopolitan audiences. Smetana excels in delicate effects, and his

symphonic music, as well as his operatic scoring, is in refreshing contrast to the meaningless dissonances of many ultra-modern radicals.

Smetana's pupil, Dvorak, is not essentially great in opera, though his two works, "Der Bauer ein Schelm" and "Der Dickschädel," are much praised in Bohemia. In place of the simpler style of his master, he has imitated Wagner's rich harmonies and warmth of colour, showing excellent discretion in attaining his effects.

The founder of the Russian school is generally admitted to be Glinka (1803–57). His operas occupy the position in Russia that Weber's do in Germany, and if they are not composed of actual Russian tunes, they reflect the deep melancholy of the popular songs so clearly that they still have a firm hold upon their public. So marked is the folk-song character of Glinka's writings that his first work, "Life for the Czar," has been

called "Musique des Cochers," but in spite of this reproach its melodic strength and splendid patriotism have won it permanent favour. The action takes place in the seventeenth century, with Russia almost wholly in the hands of the Poles. The conquerors determine to seize the person of the newly elected Czar, Michael Romanoff, and some of them, disguised as ambassadors, order the peasant Ivan Sussaninna to guide them to the royal hiding-place. Ivan despatches his son to warn the Czar, and leads the Poles astray in the marshy forests. When they discover the deception, they put Ivan to death, but not before the Czar has had time to escape.

"Russlan and Ludmilla" is founded upon a romance of the poet Pushkin, dealing with one of the mythical sagas of old Russia. It affords many chances for the employment of weird Oriental effects, and is written with much brilliancy and variety.

The two best known followers of Glinka were Dargomishky (1813–69) and Seroff (1820–71). The former produced "Esmeralda" in 1851, but his "Feast of Bacchus," which followed it, was a failure. "Russalka" (1856) scored a second great success; and "The Marble Guest," finished after the composer's death by César Cui, brought Russian opera to a high pitch of perfection. Seroff showed some native talent and originality, though he was often content with a mere imitation of Wagner's style. His most important operas were "Judith" (1863), "Ragdana" (1866), and "Die Feindliche Nacht" (1871).

Anton Rubinstein (1829–95) was possessed of great genius, but his music is unequal, and will often contain the grandest passages side by side with much that is tedious and uninspired. His operas lack the quick, sympathetic quality that is necessary for the stage, but they contain many musical

beauties. The ballet music of "Le Demon" and "Feramors" is of rare charm, but the plays as a whole are undramatic. "Nero" is spectacular in effect, and has made the round of Germany. "Moses" and "Christus," if not exactly a new form of art, are sacred operas with a distinctive flavour of their own. Rubinstein did not give his approval to Wagner, perhaps because the glory of the German master's works dimmed the lustre of his own.

Tschaikowsky (1840–93) was the greatest musical genius that Russia has produced. His instrumental works show all the beauty of the complex modern style, and possess great power and variety without ever descending to meaningless dissonance. If "Eugene Onegin" did not meet with a hearty reception when produced in London recently, the trouble arose from the disconnected nature of the libretto. Cui's "Filibustier" received a lukewarm welcome in

Paris, while Borodin's "Prince Igor" and Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Mainacht" have not yet been given outside of their native land.

The present status of music in Germany seems to indicate a broadening of lines, an effort to fuse the beauties of different schools. It is too much to expect that the world will soon see another genius of Wagner's calibre, and writers of the present are content with a composite style. A work of this sort is Kienzl's "Evangelimann," which seems to draw not only from Wagner, but from Meyerbeer, Gounod, and even Mascagni. Reznicek's "Donna Diana" is an example of elaborate orchestral humour, and has met with widespread favour. Eugene d'Albert, of English birth but German sympathies, won much success by the production of "Der Rubin." But the work that has created the deepest impression of the most recent period is Paderewski's "Manru."

The plot of "Manru" does not move very

swiftly, and it would have been better if the libretto had been condensed to one or two acts instead of strung out to three. The play opens in a village of the Tatra mountains. While the peasant maidens are preparing a harvest festival, old Hedwig appears, and laments her daughter Ulana's elopement with the gipsy Manru. The dwarf Urok, the only one who has upheld Ulana, tries to soften Hedwig's heart, but is mocked by the maidens. Ulana herself then appears, but is unable to assuage her mother's wrath, and is warned by Urok of the proverbial unfaithfulness of gipsies. She begs from Urok a love potion, which he consents to give. The festival begins, when suddenly Manru appears. He is ready to defend Ulana against the entire village, but Hedwig protects them from violence, although she will not give them her sympathy.

The second act finds Manru at work in his rustic blacksmith shop, while Ulana's

lullaby sounds from the forest hut that is their home. Manru feels the absence of the usual gipsy wanderings, and Urok appears just in time to protect Ulana from his impatient violence. A gipsy's fiddle is heard, and Manru rushes toward it, while Urok gives Ulana the potion. Manru returns with the fiddler, Jagu, who promises him the rule of the tribe if he will return, also the hand of the lovely princess Asa, who must else become the bride of the aged chief Oros. Urok overhears and warns Ulana, who gives Manru the potion, and rouses his wavering love for her.

In the third act Manru lies asleep by a lake, while dreaming of Ulana and the gipsies. The wandering band arrive in a skiff and find him. Asa begs him to remain, but the jealous Oros objects, and Manru confesses that he is bound elsewhere. Oros allows Asa to tempt Manru, thinking her love will be changed to hate by his rejection of her



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advances. She chides him for choosing a peasant girl, and tries to arouse his love of wandering, but in vain. Finally she begins the half-melancholy, half-wild song of the gipsies that she knows is his favourite, and he yields to her charms. Oros interferes, but Jagu stirs the tribe to rebel, and the old leader is forced to retire swearing vengeance, while Manru becomes chief. Again his thoughts revert to Ulana, but Asa signs for the gipsy music, and under its spell Manru departs with the band, who climb the mountain that overhangs the lake. Urok, who has been chased away, brings Ulana to the scene too late, and she ends her despair in a watery grave. Meanwhile, as the gipsies appear on the summit of a crag Oros steps forward and pushes Manru off into the depths.

The music to "Manru," like that of all modern operas, shows clearly the dominating influence of Wagner. "Manru" is no slavish

imitation, however, but is marked by great creative inspiration. Paderewski would not be a thorough musician if he did not understand and appreciate the worth of the great music-dramas. He follows no definite operatic theories, however, but shows a marked inclination for solos, duets, choruses, and ballet music, instead of the endless "Melos" of the Bayreuth plays. The score shows a marked variety of style, a thorough mastery of orchestral resource, and great power of characterisation. The irresistible rhythmic ballet in the first act, the pure tenderness of the lullaby, Manru's beautiful love song, the impassioned duet that ends the second act, the powerful dramatic prelude to the third act, Manru's restless dream, the piquant gipsy music, and the weirdly attractive measures of Asa's song, have all a distinctive flavour of their own, and speak well for the imaginative genius of the gifted Polish composer.

What the opera of the future will be, it is hard to predict. Many musicians await the coming of a master-mind who will unite Wagner's gift for vivid expression and dramatic power with a more directly melodic style. It is too early to assert that Paderewski will be this leader, for one opera does not make a school, and "Manru" has not yet been tried with the test of time. There is no doubt, however, that the short opera, with quick action and music at least fairly suited to the dramatic situation, receives the homage of the present age, whether in the form of Puccini's sensational power, Bruneau's vivid declamation, or the richly supported melodies of Goldmark, Humperdinck, and Paderewski.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

In 1762, the year when Gluck brought out his "Orpheus," Doctor Arne made a determined effort to introduce the Italian style of opera into England, and brought out his "Artaxerxes." But it had little success, despite Handel's earlier conventionalities, and after its time England held aloof from the operatic developments of the Continent, proceeding contentedly along the path of its own ballad-operas. Storace, Dibdin, Shields, Hook, and many others carried on the native form successfully, and Sir Henry Bishop (1786–1855), richly endowed with artistic gifts, produced works of notable musical value.

The first English opera that banished spoken dialogue was the "Mountain Sylph," by John Barnett, given in 1834. Balfe, Wallace, and the German Flotow inaugurated a style of popular tunefulness that holds the boards to-day, and "The Bohemian Girl," "Maritana," and "Martha" still charm by their shallow melodies. Sir Julius Benedict, also of German birth, wrote in a more sincere musical style; Sir George Macfarren introduced a good deal of learned part-writing; Goring Thomas composed much that was charming in "Esmeralda" and "Nadescha;" and Mackenzie gave the world some clever music and effective local colour in "Colomba."

Of the living English composers, Cowen has shown much geniality and some real passion in "Pauline," "Thorgrim," and "Signa," but Dr. Villiers Stanford is undoubtedly the foremost figure at present. His "Veiled Prophet" is tuneful and vigorous, "The Canterbury Pilgrims" is a rollicking old English

story with a lively musical setting, and "Shamus O'Brien" is full of the local colour of Ireland. "Much Ado about Nothing," his latest work, is said to be scholarly, but monotonous at times and lacking in distinction.

The light opera of the present hardly comes within the scope of this work, but the name of Sir Arthur Sullivan deserves more than a passing mention. His one grand opera, "Ivanhoe," is full of attractive music, but is lacking in dramatic movement and characterisation. In the field of comic opera, however, his works display a wealth of fancy and imagination that gives them an inimitable charm.

In America there has been scarcely any valuable work in operatic form. Philadelphia witnessed the production of "Leonora" in 1845, and "Notre Dame de Paris" soon after, both composed by William Henry Fry, in the style of the French grand opera. Fry was endowed with a rich musical imagination

and an excellent technical equipment, but his journalistic duties did not give him time to develop his powers of composition.

"The Scarlet Letter," by Walter Damrosch, failed because of heavy orchestration and lack of direct musical inspiration.

"Azara," by Prof. John K. Paine, is awaited with much interest. Its libretto is a tale of mediæval chivalry, and the scene is laid in Provence. Gontran, son of King Rainulf, asks the hand of Aymar's ward, Azara, as recompense for a victory over the Saracens. Being refused, he sets free the captive chief, Malek, and is disowned, while Aymar and Azara flee to the forest. Malek and his followers kill Rainulf, capture Azara, who is the long-lost daughter of the Caliph, and sail off with her before the eyes of her lover. Azara escapes and returns in disguise. Malek pursues her, but she discloses herself at the May-day festival of the court, and Malek, after a vain attempt to stab her, kills himself.

The composer's excellent work in "Œdipus" augurs well for the success of "Azara," and the Moorish dances, already performed on the symphonic stage, have been favourably received. But it remains to be seen if the lofty style of "Œdipus" has given place to a more dramatic vein. If so, then the success of "Azara" is assured.

Of the many excellent musicians that America has produced in recent years, not a few have tried their hand at grand opera. Some of their works, such as Edgar Stillman Kelley's "Macbeth" or Silas G. Pratt's "Lucille," have had successful runs on the stage, but by far the larger number remain unperformed and unpublished. For a detailed account of the present status in the new world, the reader is referred to "Contemporary American Composers," by Rupert Hughes.

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